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Whither U.S. Capitalism?

PAUL M. SWEEZY

Guatemala: The Massacre at Panzós

GABRIEL AGUILERA P.

State and Ideology in India

DAVID SELBOURNE

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Paul Sweezy is currently spending a month in Japan with his wife, Zirel. Invited by Hosei University in Tokyo, for whom he will give a series of lectures, he will also be speaking at Hitotsubashi University and for the publishing house Iwanami Shoten. The lecture he will give at Iwanami appears here as the Review of the Month (pp. 1-12). We think that the following letter from him, giving his first impressions, will be of interest to MR readers.

"We arrived in Tokyo Monday evening, October 29, and were met by our old friend, Tokue Shibata, head of the Tokyo environmental protection agency (which has done an excellent job in reducing all kinds of pollution in the Tokyo metropolitan area during the four years of his tenure), Herbert Bix, formerly at the Boston campus of the University of Massachusetts and now living and teaching in Tokyo (Hosei University, sociology department), and Professor Makoto Takahashi of the Hosei economics department. For anyone who has agonized through the international arrivals process at Kennedy airport in New York, the experience at the Tokyo airport is a very pleasant surprise—quick, efficient, no hassle, and all over in about 20 minutes. The 40-mile trip into the center of Tokyo in the early evening took only about 45 minutes.

"Tuesday afternoon we were shown around Hosei University and

(*Continued on inside back cover*)

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WHITHER U.S. CAPITALISM?

By Paul M. Sweezy

In one sense the answer to this question is that U.S. capitalism is going the way of the world capitalist system. It follows that some understanding, or at least assumption, about this is necessary to any intelligent discussion of the question. I will therefore begin by very briefly summarizing my own view of where the world capitalist system is going.

Considered as a global system, or at least the embryo of one, capitalism started in Western Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Its expansion continued with some ups and downs until the early twentieth century. The turning point, marking the end of this centuries-long expansion, came with the First World War and the Russian Revolution; and further setbacks were suffered as the result of the Second World War and the Chinese Revolution. By the middle of the twentieth century the countries with respectively the largest land area and the largest population had defected from the system. A number of others in Eastern Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa have done likewise. I do not believe that it is correct to speak of an alternative or rival global system, but capitalism has certainly suffered serious losses; and its possibilities of expansion, at least geographically and demographically, have been curtailed compared to what they were, or seemed to be, before 1914.

Nevertheless, and despite these very real losses and setbacks,

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This is the text of a lecture delivered in Tokyo under the auspices of the Iwanami Shoten publishing house and published in the Japanese magazine *Sekai*.

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it would be going too far to say that global capitalism actually went into a decline at that time. In fact it still covers well over half the world's area and population. And the countries composing it—consisting of a core or center of a few advanced industrial nations and a periphery of a much larger number of basically dependent and less developed or underdeveloped ones—enjoyed an unprecedented period of expansion and prosperity (by capitalist standards) in the quarter century after the Second World War.

That this period has now come to an end is a view shared by many people of varying political and ideological persuasions. The marked slowdown in average rates of growth accompanied by high and in some cases even rising inflation, both characteristics of the last five or six years, are not normal capitalist phenomena. Other ominous developments have been the enormous expansion of debts at both national and international levels, the growing instability of the international monetary system, the resurgence of protectionism in various forms, and a skyrocketing increase in the price of gold and other commodities thought to be relatively safe repositories of value. These are all signs that the global capitalist system has entered a time of troubles from which there is no obvious escape route.

I agree with this diagnosis but would immediately add that a time of troubles—the term, I believe, was coined by historians of the decline of the Roman Empire—even a lengthy one punctuated by severe crises and dislocations is not equivalent to collapse. Social systems in fact do not collapse. They may weaken, decline, disintegrate—history provides many examples. But the only way they can disappear is through being replaced by another social system or systems. And this is usually a prolonged process which goes through many stages. To judge from historical experience, the time span involved should be thought of in terms of centuries rather than years, decades, or even generations.

I think it is plausible and even probable that the period we are now in—the last quarter of the twentieth century—marks a true turning point in the history of capitalism in the same sense that the period 1915-1950, embracing two world wars and two major revolutions, constituted a turning point. That earlier pe-

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riod was when capitalism reached the end of its rise as a world system. Now is the time when it begins to decline.

I do not want to speculate on how long this process of decline will last beyond saying that it will certainly be a long time—say, a hundred years or more if that helps you to keep things in perspective. Nor do I want to speculate on what will ultimately take capitalism's place. As I already noted, it has already suffered major defections. But these post-revolutionary societies are still of relatively recent origin, and there is not much agreement, even among observers who share the same ideology, about their basic nature or where they are going. All we need to say for present purposes is that further defections of a similar kind are not only possible but probable and should be looked upon as an integral aspect of the whole process of capitalist decline.

This, I think, is the overall context within which the question "Whither U.S. Capitalism?" can be usefully discussed. First of all I do not think it at all likely that the United States is a candidate for early defection from the capitalist system. The pattern of these defections up to now suggests that they tend to take place not in the center where the system is strong but in the periphery where it is weak. This of course is not what Marx and Engels expected, but it is clearly in line with the conclusion Lenin drew from the experiences of the First World War and the Russian Revolution, i.e., that imperialism (his name for the global capitalist system) can be likened to a chain which most easily breaks in its weakest links.

Obviously the United States which was on the winning side in both world wars and emerged from the second one in a clearly hegemonic position is not a weak link. True, it has lost ground relative to the other advanced industrial countries in the last two decades, but it is still the most powerful single capitalist country and seems likely to remain such for the foreseeable future. Though the whole picture may change at a later stage in the process of capitalist decline, just now the most plausible assumption would seem to be that the United States will be one of the last countries to remain within the system.

What, then, are the big problems facing U.S. capitalism at the present stage of the decline of the global system? And what

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strategies and policies are likely to be adopted to cope with these problems? I will discuss them under two headings, domestic and international, bearing in mind that these categories are to a considerable extent artificial and are imposed on reality for purposes of analysis rather than reflecting a non-existent clear-cut distinction.

Domestic. Under capitalism when conditions are favorable to the accumulation of capital and the process goes forward vigorously and with only minor interruptions, all the contradictions of the system are softened and the problems to which they give rise can either be solved or at least do not generate dangerous tensions and conflicts. Conversely when the accumulation process lags, all the contradictions grow more acute, the problems become more intractable, and the tensions and conflicts more dangerous. We are now in a period of the second kind, and its most prominent characteristic is the phenomenon which has come to be called stagflation.

As the term implies, stagflation consists of two parts: stagnation (persistent high levels of unemployment and excess capacity) and inflation. The stagnation part is the direct consequence of lagging capital accumulation, the inflation of pumping up demand through credit expansion and government fiscal and monetary policies. The apparent paradox that expansion of money demand can coexist with unemployment and idle productive capacity is explained by the prevalence of monopoly, oligopoly, and other forms of administered prices throughout the economy.

Keynes's theory of the way to manage the capitalist economy through a combination of monetary and fiscal policies assumed that so long as unemployed workers and unused productive capacity existed, expansion of effective demand would call forth increased output up to the point of full employment. But in a regime of noncompetitive prices, the increase in demand is met by *both* an increase in output *and* a rise in prices; and at a certain stage, which may be reached long before full employment, the price effect so far outweighs the output effect as to negate the effectiveness of the whole strategy. When this happens we have the phenomenon of chronic stagflation.

So far as the United States is concerned, and the same ap-

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plies in varying degrees to other advanced capitalist countries, this has become in the last few years the normal state of the economy. It has to be added that once inflation has persisted for a number of years at rates which are high by historical standards, it tends to get structured into the system through the spreading efforts of wider and wider strata of the population to protect themselves against its damaging effects. When this happens, it becomes extremely difficult and perhaps impossible to check the process even by deliberately restrictive monetary and fiscal policies. In this situation—and I strongly suspect that it already exists in the United States—it may be that nothing short of a profound and prolonged depression would suffice to break the vicious cycle and halt the inflationary process.

There are of course many other domestic problems facing U.S. capitalism—energy; the physical and social decay of inner cities, manifesting itself in street crime, drug abuse, arson, and related pathological symptoms; persisting gaps between the incomes and opportunities open to whites and blacks and men and women: the list could be endlessly expanded. But they are all related in one way or another to stagflation, and there is no prospect that progress toward solving any of them could be achieved so long as stagflation dominates the economic and political scene as it now does. Domestically, therefore, stagflation must be considered *the* crucial issue around which struggles will take place to decide the direction U.S. capitalism is to follow in the period ahead.

International. I have already mentioned the growing instability of the international monetary system, and, as daily headlines keep reminding us, this is centered on the decline of the dollar vis-à-vis the currencies of the other developed capitalist countries. To understand why this is so important and what its implications are, we must recall a chapter in the recent economic history of the global capitalist system.

Emerging from the Second World War as the dominant capitalist power, the United States was able to impose on its defeated enemies and weakened allies a monetary system which officially recognized the dollar as universal money on a par (at $35 an ounce) with gold. The dollar became the unit of account for international trade and payments, and central banks

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held their reserves on which their national currencies were based in dollars as well as gold. As the world recovered from the war and entered into the unprecedented period of expansion already remarked upon, there emerged a pressing need for a growing supply of universal money; and since the supply of gold is necessarily very inelastic, this need could be met only by an increased flow of dollars from the United States into the banking systems of the rest of the world. This situation gave to the United States what has been called the "poisoned privilege" of spending more than it took in, i.e., to run a continuous deficit in its balance of payments, thus enabling it to command more and more of the world's resources without real cost. This arrangement was acceptable to all parties concerned so long as the outflow of dollars did not exceed the world's monetary need. But there was no mechanism to ensure such a correspondence of need and supply and, not surprisingly, the temptation for the United States to use the privilege to enhance its worldwide economic and military power was too strong to be resisted. So the outpouring continued on a rising scale, leading to the end of dollar/gold convertibility in 1971 and to the system of floating exchange rates in 1973. Since then things have gone from bad to worse. Greatly increased U.S. dependence on foreign oil plus two massive OPEC oil price hikes in 1973 and 1978 have vastly complicated the problems of inflation and the balance of payments: by now the dollar "overhang" (dollars held abroad and in effect constituting a claim on the United States) probably amounts to well over $800 billion. (The exact amount is not known because these so-called Eurodollars are not subject to any governmental control and their amount can be increased by the credit-creating activity of the banks in which they are held.)

The countries called upon to absorb this enormous outflow of dollars are placed in a difficult dilemma. They are well aware that dollars, like anything else in oversupply, are likely to lose in value; and if there is any inclination to forget, they are continually being reminded by the activity of private traders and speculators (including multinational corporations with huge cash resources) who, in their anxiety to avoid being trapped with unwanted dollars, exercise a more or less continuous downward

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pressure on dollar exchange rates. Central banks and treasuries would also like to reduce their dollar holdings; but they know that if they try to, they run the risk of undermining the value of their monetary reserves which are still largely in the form of dollars, and at the same time of destroying what is left of the international monetary system, with possibly disastrous consequences for all concerned. So these official agencies, instead of reducing their dollar holdings, have felt themselves obliged, more and more against their will, to go on increasing them by buying the dollars no one else wants to hold and in the process vastly expanding the supplies of their own currencies. The net result of all this has been what Robert Triffin, one of the world's leading experts on international monetary problems, has called "a fantastic increase in international liquidity" which "is undoubtedly the biggest factor in triggering the worst global inflation in history."*

The combination of domestic inflation and unremitting pressure on the dollar produced a sharp crisis at the end of October 1978, with the New York stock market dropping 100 points in two weeks and a near panic developing in the foreign-exchange markets. On that occasion the United States, acting in conjunction with its allies among the advanced capitalist countries, hastily put together a rescue operation for the dollar which succeeded in calming things down for a while but changed nothing fundamental. Now, a year later, events have reached a new climax. This time the first response of the United States has been to raise interest rates to unprecedented heights, hoping in this way to check both the domestic inflation and the decline of the dollar. The irony of the situation is that "success" in this effort would most likely mean turning what has so far been a mild recession into a deep depression.

It is too soon to judge whether this will in fact happen, but in any case it seems clear that the United States is headed for a major crisis, both domestic and international, far exceeding in scope and gravity anything experienced since the Second World War. Precisely what form it will take is impossible to guess, but it does seem likely that at some stage the government will be

*Robert Triffin, "The International Role and Fate of the Dollar," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1978/79), p. 273.

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forced to intervene in a decisive way to prevent a slide into chaos. Likely forms of such intervention are: a freeze on prices and wages, a moratorium on debts, and imposition of rigid foreign-exchange controls. Actions of this kind of course would not solve anything, but they could mark a sharp break in the continuity of events and in this way initiate a new phase in the development of capitalism both in the United States and internationally. I believe this is the specific context in which the "Whither U.S. Capitalism?" question can be most fruitfully discussed.

It is worth stressing that the stock-market crash beginning in October 1929, just fifty years ago, did not constitute such a radical break. What it did was to announce the end of the prosperity of the 1920s and the beginning of a cyclical downturn. But hardly anyone at the time thought in terms of an economic collapse such as actually materialized and of the resulting crisis affecting the whole social structure. That came only later, in 1932-1933; and the real break marking the end of one era and the beginning of another was the closing of the country's banks after Roosevelt's accession to the presidency in the spring of 1933. The origin of the New Deal dates from then, not from the stock market crash of 1929.

Attempts to apply historical experience to the analysis of a current situation are risky but necessary, and I judge this to be especially true of the New Deal and the present. The differences between then and now are large and numerous: they constitute a clear warning to proceed with caution. And yet certain similarities seem to me both striking and fundamental. This is not so much true in the economic field as in the political. The economy has undergone extensive changes in the past half century. Stagflation was as yet completely unknown; the ratio of government spending to GNP was marginal compared to what it is today; some of the institutional reforms of the New Deal, like the legal status of unions, unemployment insurance, social security, and agricultural price supports, are now built into the economic structure; and the pile-up of debt, though impressive by the standards of the day, is dwarfed by what has occurred in the last decade. In the political sphere, on the other hand, the U.S. system has shown remarkable continuity and stability. The con-

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stitutional structure is pretty much what it was, and so are the identity, character, and role of the political parties. The problems, domestic and international, which have to be dealt with through the political process are bigger, more numerous, and more complicated, but the ways and means of coping have changed but little. This, I think, is an important clue to the present situation and what may come out of it.

The New Deal did not emerge full-blown out of the crisis of the spring of 1933. On the contrary, the first stage of the Roosevelt presidency gave rise to a business-oriented and business-dominated effort to cope with the catastrophic economic situation which had by then developed (unemployment in 1933 was about one quarter of the labor force, and the rate of capacity utilization was only a little over 50 percent). This was entirely in accord with the nature of the Democratic and Republican parties and the class forces they represented. The key measure was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and the bureaucratic apparatus of industrial codes which it established. Business was in effect given *carte blanche* to organize monopolistic associations, a long-held ambition, while labor was thrown a sop in the form of unenforceable promises of the right to organize and bargain collectively, and agriculture was provided with a framework of production and price controls.

Given the desperate plight of workers, farmers, and petty producers at the time, this has to be considered a very minimal response to the situation. And in practice of course it turned out to be minimally effective. The business cycle hit bottom in 1933, but the ensuing recovery was very slow (unemployment was still at more than 20 percent of the labor force in 1934) and did little to alleviate mass suffering. The unemployed had nothing but soup kitchens and private charity to fall back on, and workers' efforts to defend themselves against rampant wage-cutting and deteriorating working conditions continued as in the past to be repressed by the courts and police.

It was in these circumstances, some four years after the stock market crash of 1929, that a real mass movement began to develop, which demanded concrete, effective measures to redress what had become an intolerable situation for literally tens of millions of people. Fortunately for the ruling class, which

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had failed its elementary responsibilities to society and was quite unprepared to take effective action, the man it had put in the White House in 1932 and who had declared the bank holiday immediately on taking office in 1933, turned out to have the qualities of a great political leader. Sensing the potential of the gathering storm, Roosevelt—instead of tailing along behind the mass movement and running the risk of letting it get out of control—put himself at its head and steered it into what were from capitalism's point of view safe waters. This was the meaning of the New Deal—a reform movement powered from below and kept within acceptable bounds by Roosevelt and the large, but probably not majority, section of the ruling class which was farseeing enough to support him.

One more comment on the New Deal will suffice for present purposes. By 1936 it had reached its peak. The reforms that affected the popular masses—work relief, public works, unemployment insurance, social security, agricultural price supports, the Wagner Act—had begun to take hold; and the cyclical recovery which had begun in 1933 was in full swing. In the 1936 elections Roosevelt was resoundingly re-elected, carrying all but two of the then 48 states. For the first time since 1929 the outlook for the future seemed good. But the euphoria was short-lived. In late 1937 a new recession struck. Unemployment rose from the 1937 level of 14.3 percent to 19 percent in 1938. The New Deal had run out of reforms, and none of them, it seemed, had any effect on capitalism's basic contradiction, the tendency to overaccumulate and overproduce. All Roosevelt could do was establish a high-level Temporary National Economic Commission (TNEC) and give it the task of studying the economy and coming in with new recommendations. Fortunately for him and for U.S. capitalism, the TNEC and the problem it was supposed to solve were soon rendered obsolete as the Second World War and its aftermath took over and gave the system a new lease on life which only now, forty years later, seems to be running out.

In a very real sense the crisis faced by U.S. capitalism today is simply a resumption of the one which was interrupted and postponed by the Second World War. The heart of the matter then was stagnation; today it is stagnation combined with in-

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flation and an enormously complicated international monetary and financial mess. The reforms introduced by the New Deal had already shown themselves powerless to cope with the problems of its own time. Today they are irrelevant, long since institutionalized and integrated into the functioning of the system. The country's political structure is totally incapable of acting effectively: its leaders do not even understand what is going on. About all they can do is institute emergency measures to check a slide into chaos. But after that, what?

I do not know, and I don't think anyone else does either. I can only speculate that the shock of panic and the fear of threatened chaos will release long-dormant political energies and lead fairly rapidly to a new constellation of political forces, as happened in 1933-1934.

If this is correct, one must expect a polarization toward the right and the left, some signs of which can already be detected. The right obviously will aim at a solution at the expense of popular living standards. The left's first concern will be defense against further cuts and perhaps attempts to recoup some of the losses suffered during recent years of aggravated inflation. But since even success along these lines would leave the basic problem untouched, it seems inevitable that the left will be forced to develop something in the nature of a comprehensive program designed to make the system work more in the interest of the lower-income groups, most of whom are wage-workers or unemployed.

It might seem that what I am describing is simply the setting for an intensified class struggle between the capitalists and their upper-income allies on the one hand and the working class on the other. And in the light of U.S. history, especially the failure of the working class at any time, even during the New Deal, to build a viable political party of its own, it might also seem that the outcome of this struggle, at least for a long time to come, is foreordained.

Those who see things in this light—and there are many of them, even on the left—tend to the view that U.S. capitalism is headed toward an American version of the corporate state, authoritarian and repressive internally, increasingly militaristic and aggressive externally.

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It seems to me, however, that matters are not quite so simple. There are at least two problems with this "solution" to the crisis of U.S. capitalism. First, it assumes that because the working class has never yet organized itself for effective independent political action it never will in the future either. In my view this reflects a simplistic view of the history of class struggles in the United States and quite unjustifiably rules out the emergence of new patterns of behavior and forms of struggle. Second, it assumes that the capitalists will be united behind a fascist-type policy of repression, and this seems to me doubtful too. Not only is a strategy of this kind costly to large elements of the middle and upper classes, as the whole history of fascism shows, but even more important, it is no solution at all to the real problems of U.S. capitalism. The basic disease of monopoly capitalism is an increasingly powerful tendency to overaccumulate. At anything approaching full employment, the surplus accruing to the propertied classes is far more than they can profitably invest. An attempt to remedy this by further curtailing the standard of living of the lower-income groups can only make things worse. What is needed, in fact, is the exact opposite, a substantial and *increasing* standard of living of the lower-income groups, not necessarily in the form of more individual consumption: more important at this stage of capitalist development is a greater improvement in collective consumption and the quality of life.

It follows that there is at least the objective basis for a cross-class alliance between those who suffer most from the system's crisis and the more far-seeing elements of the ruling class. This is similar to the situation that existed in 1933 and gave rise to the New Deal. But history never really repeats itself, and there is no need to assume that such an alliance would take the same form as it did half a century ago. The workers were very much the junior partner then. Do they have to be this time as well? The answer, in my opinion, depends not on logic or theory but on what actually happens in the course of the struggle. And that, I think, is not only what we *cannot* predict but *should not try* to predict. Better to join the struggle and try to affect its course. Not only the people of the United States but the peoples of all the world have an enormous stake in the outcome.

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THE MASSACRE AT PANZOS AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN GUATEMALA

BY GABRIEL AGUILERA P.

On May 29, 1978, the town of Panzós, capital of the municipality of that name in the department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, was the scene of a peasant massacre described by Amnesty International as the year's worst act of violence—a judgment formed before the great massacres in Iran which began in July of that year. More than 100 Indian peasants were machine-gunned in Panzós's main square, survivors finished off, and the wounded pursued into nearby mountains. The perpetrators were regular troops and armed farm owners of the region.

This bloodbath will take its place in the long list of massacres of workers on our continent, committed in this century by Latin America's dominant classes and by imperialism. Panzós has become a new symbol of the prodigious social cost of reproducing the capitalist system in the Americas—along with the notorious "incidents" in Chile (Santa María de Iquique miners in 1907, the *comuneros* in the 1930s), Argentina (rural workers in the 1920s), Colombia (banana plantation workers in 1928), El Salvador (poor peasants and Indians in 1932), and Mexico (students in Tlatelolco, Mexico City, in 1968).

Gabriel Aguilera P. is a professor of political science and history at the University of San Carlos of Guatemala, and advisor to the planning commission of the University of San Carlos. Superscript numbers in text refer to Spanish-language bibliographic data, which will be provided to any reader who requests it and sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. The translation is by Cedric Belfrage.

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Various accounts of the Panzós massacre have been published,[1] but we must continue to press for a deeper analysis of its causes: first, to help impress it on the collective consciousness of the Latin American peoples in their struggle for liberation, and second, to shed more light on the mechanisms whereby the dominant classes exercise their violence and terror. This essay should then be seen as a contribution to the debate already begun by social scientists seeking to explain the Panzós massacre.[2]

Panzós and the "Northern Transverse Strip"

As we know, reproduction of the capitalist mode of production in Guatemala has been conditioned by the Guatemalan state's dependency relationship with the central capitalist countries, particularly the United States. That relationship has also conditioned the development of our country's dominant class and consequently impresses special characteristics upon the country's class struggle.

Hence it is appropriate to recall briefly the modalities of imperialist penetration in the country, a theme which has undergone sufficient scientific analysis to be a valid point of departure.[3] That penetration was systematized in the second half of the nineteenth century when the accelerated development of productive forces in the United States propelled capitalist reproduction there into its monopoly imperialist phase. Monopoly capital, in accordance with the economic characteristics of that phase, penetrated Guatemala in the form of investment in agro-industrial production of food products for export; thus the banana enclaves came into being. U.S. investment was at the same time directed toward the service sector as reinforcement of the main productive activity and as a source of profits. This took the form of appropriation by foreign concerns of the essential means of communication and energy—railroads, docks, and electric power.

Of concern to us in the period under study are the consequences of imperialist penetration with respect to the dominant class and the state.

The agrarian oligarchy that was then the dominant class depended, by its agro-export nature, on foreign markets to sell its product and realize surplus value, and was hence unable to allow

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the development of a basic contradiction vis-à-vis foreign capital, to which it was structurally subordinated. This explains why the coffee-plantation state of the period facilitated penetration and development of the enclave by the United Fruit Co., the International Railroad of Central America, and Electric Bond & Share. The grim banana dictators running the state apparatus made these concessions under circumstances in which class domination needed to be imposed by physical force.

We must next consider the period after the Russian Revolution, characterized by accelerated changes in the capitalist system after the Second World War and the rise of socialism on a world scale—a period of transition and accommodation for dependent capitalist countries. In that situation the collapse of the Ubico tyranny in Guatemala (1944) marked the beginning of a process in which the petty bourgeoisie allied itself with the embryo of what looked like becoming a nationally-based industrial bourgeoisie, and with the meager organized sectors of the working class. The logic of this populist alliance would have been to accommodate the Guatemalan state to the above-mentioned changes in world capitalism. But the class-struggle dynamic, reflected in the growth, organization, and rising class consciousness of rural and urban wage-earners, radicalized the process, so that part of the state apparatus began to be used against the interests of the oligarchic sector of the bourgeoisie (agrarian reform) and imperialist interests (President Arbenz's triple nationalist program: roads, ports, hydroelectric installations). And this led to the notorious outcome in which imperialism and the dominant class, allied with a petty bourgeoisie that feared the popular advance, resolved the situation in their favor by using the state apparatus's most important branch from the viewpoint of social struggles—the armed forces.

The third period to consider is the restoration of a dominant class modified by developments in capitalism, in which industrial and financial elements of the bourgeoisie gain ever more weight. But the "comprador" character of this bourgeoisie remains unchanged, since industrial growth without reforms was linked to the Central American Common Market at the same time that foreign capital investment (with the United States still predominating) takes on two characteristics: the en-

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clave loses importance, and foreign capital is directed toward the production of manufactured articles in countries of the periphery. This is a phase of development in which monopoly capital is becoming internationalized in the framework of a transformation of the capitalist mode of production not yet completed and not even totally perceived.

Consequently the industrial and financial bourgeoisie, which strives for hegemony, exists and reproduces itself to the extent that its ties with imperialism are maintained and fortified. There is no way, if there ever was, to develop a sector of the dominant class in fundamental contradiction with imperialism. That is, the objective circumstances of capitalist reproduction in Central America make a national element impossible.

It is pertinent to add that the collapse of the Central American Common Market at the end of the 1960s, and global acceleration of the process of capital internationalization, are reflected in new forms of imperialist presence in the country. On the one hand, a new type of foreign investment penetrates Guatemala, originating in the southern United States and linked to the activities of small investors, including Cuban-Americans. This is directed toward branches of agro-industry (cattle), horticulture (fruits and vegetables) and floriculture for export to the United States and toward services (tourist industry).[4] On the other hand, big internationalized monopoly capital in the form of multinational corporations enters Guatemala for the extraction of minerals and hydrocarbons (e.g., the exploitation of nickel by the Canadian multinational, INCO, and of oil by, amongst others, Basic Resources), materials of high strategic value and great importance for world capitalist development.

We are concerned to broaden the analysis of changes in the state in this third period of our survey. Ever since 1954, successive governments have sought to transform the Guatemalan state in accordance with the changing needs of capitalist reproduction in the area. Planning efforts under Castillo Armas, industrial expansion and integration legislation under Ydígoras Fuentes, the mine and hydrocarbon legislation and administrative and financial modernizations under Peralta Azurdia, massive efforts under Méndez Montenegro, Arana Osorio, and Laugerud García for planned development of communications,

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hydroelectric power, and technical education (along with intensified state repression, as we will see): all this is closely correlated with the new modalities of imperialist penetration of the country and the consequent changes of relations in the local dominant class.

The change undergone by the state repressive apparatus is also significant. Beginning with the military regime of 1963-1966, the armed forces outstripped other elements of the bureaucracy in their potential for generating and using power. At the same time there was a drastic change in the situation of the officer corps and its position in the social hierarchy, so that today we see an integration of general officers with the bourgeoisie's most advanced elements, those most directly linked with transnational interests. This process of change must not be considered as an example of "Bonapartism" in the sense of military men occupying a power vacuum; rather, in our view, it must be seen as a consequence of the qualitative growth of the class struggle into its armed stage during the same period. Thus that state sector which in the last instance can preserve class domination —the armed forces—takes on proportionately greater weight.

Finally we must note that Panzós lies precisely in the area of one of the most—if not the most—significant projects for capitalist reproduction in Guatemala: the north-central region comprising the north of Izábal, Alta Verapaz, Quiché, and Huehuetenango departments, and the southwest and northwest of Petén department. There are located the Petén and Alta Verapaz oil exploration/exploitation zones (multinationals include Basic Resources, Centram-Zamora, Hispano Oil, Getty Oil); the Izábal nickel exploitation zone (Exmíbal, an International Nickel affiliate); the antimony and tungsten mines exploited by Minas de Guatemala, S.A.; the copper exploited by Transmetales, Ltda. in Ixtahuacán, Huehuetenango and Oxec, Alta Verapaz; and the pipeline under construction to bring oil from the Basic camps in Rubelsanto to the Atlantic port of Barrios (see map on p. 18).

The Guatemalan state is making every effort to develop this area, where exploitation of Guatemalan resources for the benefit of international monopoly capital is concentrated, by providing the multinationals with necessary infrastructure. This

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includes construction of the Chixoy hydroelectric installation in Alta Verapaz, designed to produce 300,000 kilowatt-hours by the end of 1981, and the complex known as the "Northern Transverse Strip," covering the far north of Izábal, Alta Verapaz, and Quiché departments and a small part of Huehuetenango. The "Strip" extends over 8,106.41 square kilometers and has five sectors: Ixcán, Lachná, Sebol, Modesto Méndez, and Livingston.

Originally the "Strip" was a project to open a "virgin soil" area for cultivation, to settle landless campesinos, and at the same time to increase the country's production of basic grains. Project studies began appearing in the mid-1960s in the framework of National Agrarian Transformation Institute (INTA) plans; and colonization of the area began, such as that of the

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Maryknoll Fathers who, from 1966 on, brought 1,600 campesino families from Huehuetenango and El Quiché to form agricultural cooperatives in the Ixcán area.

Large-scale colonization is now on the agenda: INTA has concentrated all of its activity in the "Strip" with a view to eventually settling 70,224 families in cooperative enterprises over a 573,256-hectare area. To facilitate this, INTA and the army engineer corps are building a transverse highway from Modesto Méndez in Petén to Barillas in Huehuetenango, with AID financing.

This highway is a key part of the infrastructure development mentioned above, since it will give access to oil exploitation and construction of the pipeline.[5] As for the INTA colonization scheme, it also fits into the capitalist project, since only 42 percent of the area is identified as agricultural, and massive peasant mobilization there rouses fears for the economic viability of the scheme and for the conversion of the region's natural resources. However, the presence of a poor peasant mass may be necessary to provide cheap and abundant labor for the various capitalist enterprises to be established. In any case, what the "Strip" project means for the system in Guatemala is indicated by the appointment of an army general to head it up.

Another project for the "Strip" area, important not only for Guatemala's capitalist development but for the United States as well, is the inter-ocean pipeline which will take Alaskan oil from Champerico (or possibly some other port) on the Pacific to Puerto Barrios on the Atlantic en route to east coast U.S. refineries. Since the rise of OPEC the Central American capitalist countries have stepped up exploitation of oil resources in their own territories, and Alaskan production is supposed to supply 10 percent of total U.S. consumption. The Guatemalan pipeline project, backed by the bourgeois sector that is decisive in determining state policies, will further deepen Guatemala's integration into the world capitalist system.

Panzós and Guatemalan Social Struggles

All this goes on in an area that has been relatively isolated, with an economy traditionally based on the most backward kind of coffee plantation, and with day-laborers and impoverished

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small farmers predominating in the exploited class. Concentration of modern mining and oil centers in such an area, together with the creation of an accompanying infrastructure, have speeded changes in the economic base and in relations of production. Today it is an area of concentrations of wage-workers in modern industrial enterprises, where real estate is valued in terms of mineral possibilities, not agricultural production. Thus the big property owners, including military and political bigwigs, tend to link themselves to the interests of internationalized monopoly capital rather than to the traditional oligarchy. Hence the class struggle in the area takes on qualitatively higher forms. Some of the biggest worker mobilizations of the past have been brought about by labor conflicts in this area. Among these have been:

(a) *Miners of San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán, Huehuetenango.*

This conflict involved a confrontation between the miners' union and Minas de Guatemala, S.A., which sought to break the union by closing the mine. It was won by the workers who organized the famous "Ixtahuacán miners' march" in November 1977. As part of a national mobilization sponsored by the National Trade Union Unity Committee (CNUS), 80 miners marched 300 kilometers to the capital. They reached Guatemala City at the same time as another column of workers from the Pantaleón de Escuintla sugarmill. The two columns marched in on November 19 accompanied by a crowd estimated, at one point, at 100,000 persons.[6]

(b) *Workers of Oxec-Chixoy*

Two labor conflicts broke out simultaneously in April 1978. One involved workers in the Oxec mine in Cahabón, Alta Verapaz, owned by the Guatemala Mining Corporation operating under the name of Transmetales—part of the multinational Basic Resources, which also exploits oilfields around Rubelsanto. The other was at the Chixoy hydroelectric installation built by various firms, among them the Italian Cogefar and the German Hochtief. Both conflicts arose from wage demands and included a march to the city of Cobán which also evoked big local and national demonstrations of solidarity. Both were finally won by the workers.[7]

While the workers fought for their demands, campesino

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struggles erupted in the "Strip" area arising from conflicts over land. Such struggles generally break out when latifundists resort to legal maneuvers, especially what is known as "supplementary entitlement," to appropriate lands of small peasant owners whose titles to them are often defective or unprovable. As a sociologist specializing in the subject has pointed out, this type of robbery occurs in areas where land is being re-assessed, due either to the expansion of agro-industry (as on the south coast) or to penetration by multinationals as in the case in point.[8]

When conflicts of this sort arise the state security forces are apt to intervene more speedily than in urban areas to resolve the problem in the oligarchy's favor. They are equally quick on the draw in other rural confrontations such as those stemming from attempts by the agrarian exploited class to organize unions. The state's generally lower "tolerance" in the countryside than in the city, which one notes in analyzing the dynamic of the class struggle and the terror in Guatemala, is of course not accidental. It responds to the fact that while urban manufacturing workers are a small minority of the proletariat, rural wage-workers are the great majority of the exploited class, giving the countryside an enormous but yet undeveloped revolutionary potential. This explains the state's creation in 1964 of an armed force with the main original function of rural repression: the Policía Militar Ambulante.

The area under study has, however, been the scene not only of "normal" rural repression but of more extensive terror operations. Highly specialized army units participate in these, in addition to police and irregular and paramilitary groups. In the past four years such incidents of massive violence have occurred in municipalities of northern Quiché, particularly Chajul, San Juan Cotzal, and Nebaj, inhabited by the Ixil people: a partial count identified 28 kidnapped inhabitants of San Juan Cotzal in three years.[9] Some of the most violent repression occurred in villages of the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas settlement in Ixcán Grande, in the "Strip" area.*

It is from this perspective that the Panzós massacre must be seen. The immediate background was a clash between im-

* Roger Plant, *Guatemala: Unnatural Disaster* (London: Latin American Bureau, 1978).

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poverished campesinos cultivating plots of vacant land in Panzós municipality and big farmers of the area who sought to dislodge them. But in what had seemed to be just another episode of the daily struggle for land in Guatemala, an extraordinary degree of terror was unleashed. The "normal" thing would have been the kidnapping, torture, and murder of a few leaders by "unidentified armed men." Instead, there was a generalized massacre in full light of day and in the presence of dozens of surviving witnesses. Asking ourselves what the logic of such super-terror could have been, we offer the following hypothesis.

We have analyzed the importance of this region for the country's capitalist development, and seen that the state's "contribution" is to create suitable local conditions. This "creation" of conditions involves not only infrastructural works, labor mobilization, etc., but also creation of the necessary "social peace," i.e., preventing the development and mobilization of popular organizations which could hamper the project of capitalist development. It was thus as a response to the growth of combative trade unionism that the student leader and trade unionist Mario Mujía Córdoba was assassinated in June 1978 in the departmental capital of Huehuetenango. And when "Guerrilla Army of the Poor" units began operations in the area—attacking oil camps and killing the well-known latifundist José Luis Arenas Barrera—the response took the form of military operations and a terror campaign against the population. The great Panzós massacre was a logical culmination of this campaign to terrorize the people into withholding support from the insurgents and to suffocate the cries for land.

This hypothesis suggests that Panzós was no isolated or accidental event. Big public massacres come within the tactics of terror, despite their political disadvantages for the terror machine, in that the usual denials of state participation are ruled out and that consequent national and international accusations have to be confronted. On the other hand they multiply a hundred times, as far as the public at large is concerned, the intimidating effect which is the name of the terror game. By this logic the massacre of 115 campesinos bears a clear if unarticulated message: social struggles, including struggles for land, must stop, in the "Strip" area, on pain of death.

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Conclusions

(1) Current capitalist development in Guatemala brings two types of foreign capital penetration: from the so-called "Sun Belt" directed toward new branches of agro-industry and tourism, and from big international monopoly capital for exploitation of minerals and hydrocarbons.

(2) The Guatemalan state once again performs its role as instrument of the dominant classes and seeks to create suitable conditions for the country's capitalist development, under new circumstances brought about by changes in the capitalist mode of production on a world scale.

(3) At this time the area known as the "Northern Transverse Strip" contains the country's biggest capitalist development project, a mining and oil complex with major state backing, including a penetration highway, a hydroelectric installation, and colonization programs to supply a labor force.

(4) In the framework of this project the class struggle has spread in various forms: struggles of unionized workers against the multinational affiliates, of poor campesinos against latifundists for land, and of armed guerrillas against the state security forces.

(5) The Guatemalan state's repressive policies appear with greater intensity in the "Strip" region, due to this project's importance for the Guatemalan dominant class and for international monopoly capital. Various terror tactics are used: operations by "clandestine" anti-communist groups; threats, selective assassinations, kidnappings and collective killings; finally, large-scale massacres like that of Panzós. With these measures the state seeks to prevent popular organizations and mobilization.

(6) The terror policy will not succeed, since Guatemala's capitalist development is inevitably accompanied by qualitative and quantitative growth of the proletariat. Consequently, despite the continuous slaughter, the class struggle by which the exploited class seeks its liberation tends to expand and intensify.

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STATE AND IDEOLOGY IN INDIA

BY DAVID SELBOURNE

This is still an unfamiliar topic. Why? Because, despite the increasing attention which is being paid to the political economy of India by progressive intellectuals working in the disciplines of the social sciences, the categories of Gramsci and Althusser (to say nothing of those of Marx and Lenin) do not appear to correspond adequately to the reality of India. Part of the problem is that intellectually the term Third World is so potent, indeed hegemonic. Through over-use it has come to signify only a world of poverty, dependency, and "over-population." Simplistically suggesting a faraway terrain of cyclical *coups d'état* and famines, it too often presents us, in addition, with symbolic and pictorial images of suffering which stifle analysis.

Moreover the technically more sophisticated managerial analysts who claim to have reached a higher (because more practical, more "useful") level of understanding of India, them-

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This article is a revised version of a paper given at a symposium on India, convened by the Gandhi Friedengesellschaft (Gandhi Peace Society) in Heidelberg, West Germany, on January 20 and 21, 1979. David Selbourne is a tutor in politics at Ruskin College, Oxford, and author of *An Eye to India.*

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selves often employ hierarchies of terms such as "developed," "developing," and "underdeveloped" which contain and conceal their own epistemological assumptions, and which are also too frequently an alternative to explanation. And those whose political perceptions express themselves in the banal and functional application to the "Third World" of ideologically loaded categories such as those of "modernization" (read Westernization) and "change," are not really in any better position to grasp the realities of a polity such as India's.

Worse still, in my judgment, are those caught up in another aspect of the political vocabulary of imperialism: those who see India as a special case, or rather those who see Indians as possessing a particular nature. This is a "nature" which, as we have been told since the days of the British Raj, supposedly serves to explain the peculiar and undoubted specificities of the Indian past and present. After all, the works of Victorian colonial administrators, "Orientalists," diarists, and travelers are full of a third-rate racist anthropology which seeks to tell us what the Indians "are." Their "national character" is presented as a *datum*, a given, and by definition inferior in quality and status to that of the observer.

Even some who should know better can still fall victim to a hidden—that is, ideologically submerged—distinction between the "developed" and the "underdeveloped," within which there lurks precisely this older imperialist anthropology of the "civilized" and the "primitive." I think I hear its accents, too, in the agreement that the "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie" in Western Europe (the "First World") is more subtle, more "sophisticated," mediated with greater skill and cunning than it is in India or in other countries of the "Third World." And we might even begin to ask whether the categories and strategies of modern social and political anthropology, despite the valuable contributions they have made to knowledge, may not also contribute to darkening, in crucial respects which cannot be afforded, our understanding of the political economy of India.

Certainly it seems to be at least arguable—and it needs to be argued—that in conjuring up what I believe to be the ideological fantasy of a unique Indian specificity dominated

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and determined by caste formations and struggles, social anthropologists (however radical) have contributed something of substance toward the displacement of other modes of analysis of Indian society. Objectively, of course, caste exists. Its influence is profound both on the conduct of state affairs and upon the daily life of the people. Without a knowledge of caste, the populist rural movement of the Kisans, of the "middle-castes" of Yadavas, Ahirs, Kurmis, Koeris, Hajjams, and Jats led by Charan Singh could not be fully understood. Likewise with the "caste-conflict" in Bihar, between the Rajputs and the Bhumihars and the Brahmins and the Kayasthas on the one hand, and the increasing power and confidence of the "backward" castes on the other; or the complex caste formations on which Mrs. Gandhi bases her appeal to the "poorer and weaker sections."

But the problem about caste, both subjectively and objectively—that is, as foundation of a political epistemology and as social practice—is that, at worst, it helps to make an anthropological mystery of the political economy of India. Indeed, I would argue that the tendency to confine India (and not only India) to the ideological realm of the "mysterious Orient" is so strong that caste, despite the fact that it is an objectively historical product of the institutionalization of the division of labor, despite the fact that it is a source of real power and real oppression and a gross obstacle to social progress, despite the fact that it is above all now a means of legitimizing *class hatred*, despite all this, caste continues to play a generally obscurantist role in the perceptual structure of Indian politicians and Western social scientists alike.

As a result, it becomes easier to argue not merely that India possesses its cultural particularities and specificities, as it obviously does, but that its political and social formations are peculiarly unfathomable except to latter-day Orientalists. Moreover, the anthropological fetishization of caste has given additional impulse to the tendency, inside and outside India, to misperceive class analysis as characteristically Eurocentric, and hence irrelevant to India and Indians. Within this argument, too, we must consider whether there may be concealed that wider ideological proposition, fruit of colonialism and racialism,

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that "they" are not like "us"; that, despite the claims of a class analysis, India—essentially primitive—remains a "tribal" society, caste-divided and structurally unanalyzable unless priority or at least equivalence is given to its caste divisions. And where caste has such ideological and epistemological priority over class, certain forms of analytical inquiry and understanding are likely to be impeded. Not least among them is the accommodation of the concept, which corresponds as never before to contemporary events in India (and not only India), that there exists a continuous process of class differentiation within and across caste formations which is accelerated during periods of economic crisis.

Lastly there is that other and related ideological mystification regarding the nature of the Indian polity, namely, that its sheer complexity, undoubted as it may be, defies rational comprehension. It is held that India, with its juxtaposed and interdependent worlds of the secular and the religious, the capitalist and the feudal, the urban and the rural; with its multi-layered density of social elements, including caste and class formations; with its manifold contradictions, from economic subordination and mass beggary on the one hand to substantial economic and industrial development on the other; with its internal multiplicities and diversities of language and culture; with its present kaleidoscopic pattern of state governments from Kashmir to Goa, and from Kerala to Calcutta—it is held that with all this, and more besides, India eludes intellectual appropriation and defeats our understanding.

It is in this context that to speak of "state and ideology" in India—or Iran, or Egypt, or Saudi Arabia—will (wrongly) appear to be a simple miscalculation, a crude Occidental oversimplification of a hidden Oriental reality which is too steeped in its own history and its own nature to be grasped, especially by an outsider. Unquestionably there is a certain truth in this. But we must go beyond this concession, since it involves precisely the acceptance of an ideological relation to India, to the "Third World," to the "underdeveloped," which we do not have to our own societies. That is, it arguably involves a dual epistemology, two ways of knowing the real world, unacceptable to reason.

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II

Instead let us consider, first, the undoubted ideological complexity of political practice in India, which is in turn rooted in the enormous gulf between Indian political illusion and Indian material reality, and which I discussed in my book on the 1975 Emergency, *An Eye to India.** Is it a special case, this gulf, confined to India? Obviously not. But if not, what are we dealing with in India, with its huge despairs, its millions upon millions on the threshold of existence on the one hand, and its politics of "consensus," say, or of Gandhian *ahimsa,* predicated on doing harm to none, on the other?

Let me assert a general principle at the outset. I believe that the survival of any class society—in particular a class society such as India's, dominated by a combination of feudal and, to a lesser extent, capitalist vested interests in the countryside and the mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie in the cities, all of them riding on the backs of hundreds of millions—always depends on a disparity and disjunction between what it really is, and the *appearance* it displays to its subjugated and exploited members.

Such illusion is a crucial element in a class society, which is held together not merely by repression but by mechanisms which disguise its basic nature. And the greater the cruelty and inequality, the greater the degree of exploitation and human misery, the greater the need for falsehood to permeate the world which the citizens of a polity experience. So that in a society such as India's, the gross nature of the illusions which govern it play no less functional a role than do the battalions of armed police which have been created to defend the interests of the Indian ruling class in the thirty years of Indian "democracy"—the "world's largest"—since "independence." Indeed, "socialism," "democracy," and "independence" have served as three of the principal ideological props in a structure of Indian illusion which has helped to sustain a social order rooted in economic exploitation, political inequality, and national dependence upon and subordination to the global division of labor. There

* David Selbourne (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1977).

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are of course other props, including (in the last analysis) the ideology of Gandhianism, to which I will return in a moment.

So that if the specific gap between Indian illusion and reality is a notably wide one, it is a gap which is governed by the width of the real *objective* disparities between the worlds of the rich, the poor, and the poorest of India. More precisely, it is a gap which is governed by the *objective* political necessity to feed the hungry with the promise of fulfillment, and with the ideological forms which will pacify their sense of outrage. And it is thus no less the case in India than in the West, with its supposedly more sophisticated means of mediating between the truth and illusion, that the so-called "ideological state apparatus" must carry out such complex tasks of political manipulation, distraction, and containment in order to maintain the stability of the Indian state and its monstrous social system.

III

The Indian Emergency, that Emergency of the ruling class which was classically transposed onto the backs of the people, showed that where the stability of the state is threatened by intra-class and inter-class conflict, by economic crisis, above all by a crisis of hegemony (or of "consensus") as it was in India in June 1975, then—as we would expect if this analysis is correct—there will be an escalation of the levels both of repression and of ideological manipulation. There will be further turns of the screw both of state-authorized violence and of state-organized mystification.

Those who have read my book will know that I paid equal attention to both—not merely to the orgy of arrests but also to the deluge of rhetoric which characterized the period. Skillfully handled, the latter combined the illusions of a new "socialist" renaissance and of a rapid economic transformation; combined anti-Western demagoguery with pseudo-Chinese political terminology; combined the promise of the resurgence of the nation with the defeat of the enemies of the people, internal and external; combined a 20-point socio-economic program with the bastinado and the airplane-torture; combined populism with physical and ideological repression.

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It was these phenomena, in their setting, which suggested to me, when I wrote the book, the necessity for a new political category of explanation: that of the "national socialism of 'underdevelopment.'" Thus I signified that the Emergency expressed not merely a specific Indian response of class, party, and person to a crisis of hegemony in the Indian state (as it did), but above all presented characteristics common to those nations in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, similarly gripped by politico-economic crisis, similarly unreformed internally, and similarly subordinated within the international division of labor.

Once more, Indian specificity, but not uniqueness.

IV

And is it not the case that this spurious "socialism" which plays so large a part in the rhetoric of the *ruling class* of India, Emergency or no Emergency, makes of India an ideologically *developed*, not undeveloped, nation? After all, this "socialism" of Mrs. Gandhi and her like not only appealed at the time, but still appeals (despite the thuggery, paranoia, and anti-working-class violence of her politics) to European social democrats, and even left social democrats in Britain, to say nothing of the CPSU and its followers in India. Moreover, it is precisely this politics which is ideologically restructured in perception as the politics of the "progressive national bourgeoisie," ostensibly leading India to an even more "socialist" future.

Now it is one thing for a tiny ruling-class clique, a dynastic faction, a Kuomintang-type family, to claim the right to rulership over an industrializing society of 600 million, the second largest civil society in the world, in the late 1970s. But to do so in the name of *socialism*, democracy (the "world's largest"), economic progress, and national independence, is quite another matter. And this is precisely a matter, manipulated in India with great skill, of ideology as necessary illusion, to which I referred earlier.

It contains and promises this "socialism" of leading sections and parties of the ruling class—just like its close relation in populist illusion, the "total revolution" of Jayaprakash Narayan, neither total nor a revolution—a (spurious) sense of na-

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tional collectivity, social justice, collective sacrifice and political morality. Why? Because these slogans are in fact the very things *objectively* imposed upon the ruling class by the dire necessity to contain precisely those deepening class divisions and class tensions in Indian society the existence of which many of these same "socialists" would be among the first to deny.

But it is a bastard mutation, this "socialism" of ruling-class interests in India, a mutant form of any truly egalitarian and fraternal ideology. It is a political mutation, not confined to India, which is being brought about by the need for ideological self-defense against the continuous development of increasingly distinct forms of class confrontation. And these struggles are not merely an abstract historical constant of a managerial political theory. They are a growingly important feature of a rural India battling with landlordism and landlord violence, and advancing the demand for rights and land. Above all, they are battles which neither the "anthropological mystery" of caste nor the real phenomenon of caste hatred can effectively obscure.

And in these battles which are being fought on both sides with such physical brutality, it is (as an ultimate irony) the rhetoric but not the practice of "socialism" which is being used by sections of the ruling class as an instrument of ideological class domination over the oppressed masses of the people. The ruling class has tried to seize from the people what Amilcar Cabral called the "weapon of theory," turning this two-edged weapon of socialism against precisely those suffering millions in whose interests it was first forged as their own instrument of struggle. Moreover, this is a tendency which will in the future develop much further, in the "Third World" and beyond it.

V

It is by this route that we should be able to see that India is neither "unique" anthropologically, nor mysterious, nor fatally complex, however onerous the task of political analysis may be. Instead, it is an archetype, in the very forefront of those societies in which the struggle of classes and interests is at its bitterest and destined to become still more bitter. Indeed it was the Emergency which served to reveal—in what one can call the "slip-

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ping of the mask" and in its vain attempt to close the gap between illusion and reality by force—the extremes of the capacity for class violence by the Indian ruling class in defense of its threatened interests. It revealed, too, the degree of its *class hatred*—the assaults on the homes and the bodies of the most downtrodden, the ruthless campaign of sterilization of millions of the most defenseless sections, precisely the "poorer and weaker sections" in whose names (and in the name of "socialist" progress) the Emergency was declared.

Yet we must also remember that such forms of exercise of power over the people are continuities, not novelties, in the politics of India. Furthermore these forms are governed less by special Indian historical circumstances than by the internal constraints of class rule and the external constraints of economic insufficiency and international exploitation. Indeed, it is precisely the extreme and often contradictory nature of these political and economic constraints which make India so volatile politically, as the future will increasingly reveal. Moreover, it is these same constraints which, in the ideological realm, also impede the development both of a unified and common structure of class illusion, as well as of a coherent class politics of genuinely reforming Benthamism, or radical utilitarianism. It is thus that India's "national bourgeoisie" cannot advance consistently along a politically progressive path and is so often prevented, unlike the British ruling class in the nineteenth century, from doing effectively what is in its own interests to do. (This is also, obviously, one of its greatest weaknesses as a class formation, and dialectically a source of actual and potential political strength to the movements opposed to it.)

Indeed the sense of hatred for the poor, the homeless, and the downtrodden, together with the violent impatience at the incoherent economic progress and "overpopulation" of India which are revealed by the politics of Sanjay Gandhi and his entourage, are two sides of this same coin. To which we should add that such a politics contains a form of (extremely anti-utilitarian) racialism, merely legitimized by caste and in part inherited ideologically by "Westernized" Indians from the former colonial masters. It could perhaps be described as the politics of "brown sahibs" who have assumed the "white man's burden."

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And this politics—a combination of the promise of capitalist economic development, social "stability," and political terror—since it represents specific, determinate, and objective socio-economic interests, was not only suppressed by the restoration of parliamentary democracy, but continued to flourish, if with less blatancy, under the successor Janata regime.

Why? Because objective socio-economic interests *cannot* be suppressed. It is equally obvious that the forms of parliamentary and liberal democracy can coexist in any polity, as they do in India, with extremes of authoritarianism and violence. Their long-standing conjunction in India in no sense defies rational comprehension, since together they constitute the legacy of the colonial state apparatus; the colonial state is characteristically embedded in the postcolonial. Moreover, the fundamental provisions of the Indian constitution, the rule of law, the doctrine of *habeas corpus,* the independence of the judiciary, and the separation of powers also contribute to the Indian polity necessary features of a hegemonic structure of formal (and sometimes significant) protections and even more significant illusions. They can be called the *ethical* forms of the political authority transferred by the Raj to that small minority which rules over the mass of the Indian people.

It was precisely these ethical forms, because they were essentially ethical forms only, which the Emergency—like the Nazi period in Germany—swept away, when severe political crisis made of them moral luxuries which an always potentially violent ruling class could afford no longer. And it is obvious that the presence, and the attempted destruction of these ideological institutions does not in itself make a reading of the Indian polity more complex. On the contrary they confirm it as archetypal, a social formation which, whatever its particularities, is organized in ways deeply characteristic of the most obvious forms of class power.

VI

And yet the Indian state and Indian ideology both possess their own specificities, precisely in those "ethical" or "moral" forms which serve to mask the real nature of the material con-

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ditions of existence of the people. Moreover, the moral politics of "Gandhianism"—to which I chiefly refer—is also a component part of the specific form of India's ruling-class ideology of "socialism," just as (without pressing the analogy too closely) religious nonconformism is part of the ideology of British "laborism." And even if the moralities of a Tolstoy or a Kropotkin clearly reveal that the leading features of the Gandhian ethic have been by no means confined to India, the forms of political expression of its doctrines of *ahimsa, sarvodaya,* and *satyagrapha,* of poverty and simplicity, of economic self-sufficiency and self-denial, compose a specifically Indian construct of substantial ideological importance.

I believe therefore that it is superficial to argue glibly, as some have, that Gandhi was merely working out a form of personal salvation in public. It is likewise superficial, though exceedingly tempting, to dismiss the Gandhian principle of nonviolence as an empty hypocrisy in a state as violent as India. For the truth is that—however complex (or incoherent) a morality which combines the liberalism of John Locke with prohibition, and the wisdom of the *Upanishads* with the economy of Ruritania—the Gandhian ethic is nevertheless widely held to be normative and is therefore itself a hegemonic ideological constituent of India's political culture—part of a structure of perception and self-perception which cannot be confined to this or that class or class fraction.

But it is necessary to add that even if the worst excesses of violent Hindu obscurantism and national-religious revivalism on the one hand, and the most benign and pacific forms of Gandhianism on the other weigh very differently in the scales of a moral judgment, they nevertheless occupy positions on the same spectrum of ideological illusion. Moreover, they are positions which are not always opposed to one another. Both represent increasingly familiar forms of idealist crusades; both in essence (despite the humane intention of Gandhian social practice) are expressions of political and economic reaction; and both reflect forms of consciousness alienated from the real causes of the socio-economic problems of the Indian polity and therefore from their real solutions. So that neither the chauvinist politics of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (the militant,

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and in some respects paramilitary, arm of the Jan Sangh, the reactionary party of Hindu nationalism) and the glorification of *Bharat* (India) on the one hand, nor the politics of *Khadi* (home-spun cloth) and a simple rustic utopia on the other, correspond to the actual material circumstances and needs of the Indian people. Yet this in no way diminishes their ideological force both subjectively and objectively, since a class society, as I have already said, depends not only on the power of violence but also upon the disarming power of illusion for its survival.

VII

Let me end by discussing briefly one further aspect of our false perception of India, an "external" illusion which reproduces and reinforces the indigenous self-image fostered by the Indian ideological apparatus, and which is a profound source of mystification of Indian social and political reality.

This illusion, the greatest illusion of all about India (and not only India), presented in many different guises including the disinterestedly "academic," insists that the rural and industrial "masses," the millions of poor peasants, the legions of the landless, unemployed, underemployed, and homeless are in the last analysis *culturally,* or *"sociologically,"* incapable of sustained mass acts of collective social and economic emancipation against their persecutors and oppressors. This illusion insists, above all, that "Indians" (usually stopped in their tracks by caste) are incapable of creating the coherent and effective political organization required to lead such mass movements. It is an illusion insisted upon, in one way or another—philosophically, historically, anthropologically, but always in essence *a priori*—despite the struggle for independence, despite the succession of peasant uprisings since independence, despite the defeat of Mrs. Gandhi, despite the intensifying battle for land rights slowly spreading across India. And it is an illusion grounded in familiar and age-old assumptions, transmitted from one generation to another, that the "Indians"—or the Africans, or the Latin Americans, or the Arabs—are (variously) congenitally inert, lacking in "political will," "fatalistic," or "passive."

Now it would be well to recall here—as a warning to those

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who hold such a view, and despite the dangers of argument by analogy—what Edgar Snow said of the temper of the Chinese, after witnessing the Great Famine of 1929 in Northwest China, when between three and six million people died.

"Why don't they revolt," I asked myself. "Why don't they march in a great army, and attack the scoundrels who can tax them, but cannot feed them; who can seize their lands, but cannot provide them with irrigation? Why don't they sweep into the great cities and plunder the wealth of the rascals who buy their wives and daughters, the men who continue to gorge on thirty-six course banquets, while honest men starve? Why not?" I was profoundly puzzled by their passivity. I thought nothing would make a Chinese fight. I was mistaken.*

Within only twenty years Snow was proved wrong. He was proved wrong because, whatever the degree of ideological manipulation, whatever the degree of state repression, whatever the degree of (supposed) cultural inertia, whatever the force—and it is substantial—of family, or caste, or religion, there is nothing illusory about food and clothing and shelter. Only a knave, or a liar (or someone with a full stomach) would dare to assert that to the "Hindu" the whole world is an illusion, and that *therefore* such things do not matter. For they are the true dimensions of the real world of necessity, of the "real circumstances of real human beings." And though in India they are the subject of hungry dreams and half-naked longing on the one hand, and of false promises, 10-point programs, 20-point programs, and 30-point programs on the other, their attainability is also not an illusion.

For, as I have pointed out elsewhere, India is a rich country which is poor, not a poor country which is poor. And as long as this is the case, we can be certain that the birth-pangs of India's revolution will prove, perhaps in our lifetime, not to be an illusion either.

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* Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books [Pelican imprint], 1972), p. 249.

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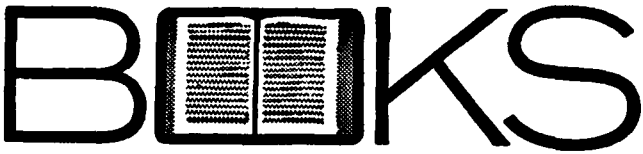

FORMS OF CAPITALIST CONTROL OVER THE LABOR PROCESS

I

By Jules Geller

Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century by Richard Edwards. New York: Basic Books, 1979, 261 pages; $12.95.

Richard Edwards' *Contested Terrain* is a far-ranging and ambitious work which aims to develop, on the basis of original research and a considerable familiarity with the literature, a new analysis of the history of capitalist control of the labor process, the nature of the working class that this history has produced, and the political conclusions that flow from the analysis.

It is clear that Edwards is a spokesperson for those who have complained of shortcomings in Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (Monthly Review Press, 1974), such as his "failure" do deal with the political question and his alleged underestimation of the role of class struggle in limiting and influencing the forms of control of the workplace; Edwards also claims that Braverman naïvely overestimated Taylorism as a management theory. All these questions deserve discussion.

Jules Geller, currently the Director of Monthly Review Press, was a socialist organizer in the auto industry in the late thirties, and worked in the rubber industry in the forties. Together with Harry Braverman he left the Socialist Workers Party in 1953 and founded the *American Socialist*. Before joining Monthly Review Press, Geller worked at Grove Press and Random House.

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The attention we are giving *Contested Terrain* is necessary not because of its contribution to a discussion of these questions, but because it is representative of a doctrinaire methodology antithetical to a correct understanding of the labor process and its control and of the political implications of modern development of the workplace.

Edwards' schematic division of the forms of control of the labor process into three categories, "simple," "technical," and "bureaucratic" (well-described in Steve Diamond's accompanying review) is offered as a substitute for what he considers to be Braverman's anachronistic view of Taylorism. First place in contemporary developed capitalism is given to the third category, "bureaucratic control," which is a euphemism for the schools of industrial psychology and "human relations" which many sociologists and, sad to say, economists as well have misread as a fundamental aspect of the development of management science. Braverman did not ignore the growth of subjective means of control of work. "The successors to Taylor," he wrote, "are to be found in engineering and work design, and in top management; the successors to [Hugo] Munsterberg and [Elton] Mayo [who dealt with "human relations"] are to be found in the personnel departments and schools of industrial psychology and sociology." The first is concerned with control of work. The second with control of workers. We are asked to believe that much more sophisticated peddlers of the Horatio Alger myth, selling upward mobility, company rules, and the comfortable security of corporate families, now dominate management's efforts to control the labor process. Attempts to control and manipulate workers' thinking have always been a part of the science of management, from Taylor's time to the present. The changes have been quantitative and considerable, but not qualitative. And one technique is not distinct in time from another, as Edwards claims.

For example, the Ford Motor Company, prior to the establishment of the UAW in its plants, combined the use of what Edwards would call "technical control" (conveyor system in this case) with a system of brutal physical intimidation, which I suppose belongs to the Taylor system ("simple control"). While the Ford thugs enforced discipline and the open shop, the company's "human engineering" department sent "welfare investigators" to workers' homes to determine whether the family life was up to Ford's ideal, to see whether the proper morality was practiced, and whether the workers and their families understood Ford's notions of what it meant to be a decent American worker. While the welfare department developed clean-living Fordites, the company put into prac-

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tice more of Edwards' "bureaucratic control" by holding out the carrot of "upward mobility" to black workers, who were offered the opportunity, unique in the automobile industry, to work their way up to jobs other than pushing a broom.

Obviously, the techniques so arbitrarily divided into separate categories of both time and method are unevenly developed and applied; they coexist, and are in reality all part of the continuing Taylorism defined in Braverman's work. Taylorism was not and is not a blueprint for control applied everywhere and at all times in all its detail. The term was used in *Labor and Monopoly Capital* because Taylor was the most articulate and outspoken thinker on the subject, and his development of the practice into theory gave management its most influential body of thought. He was neither the first nor the last contributor to the theory. As used by Braverman, the term is meticulously defined. Taylorism is a theory with three basic principles: *first,* dissociation of the labor process from the skills of the workers; *second,* separation of conception from execution; *third,* the use of this monopoly of knowledge to control each step of the labor process. It is best to discuss Braverman's view of Taylorism on the basis of the ground he stood upon and not on some mechanical concepts attributed to him.

Though these principles of Taylorism, which are not so "simple," have been applied unevenly and in different ways, they have been capitalism's method of incessantly pushing for an increasing rate of exploitation and the accumulation of capital. They have led to the degradation of work both in the industrial and non-industrial workplace. Taylorism is thus not merely a blueprint drawn seventy-five years ago, but a developing theory based upon the above three principles, subsumed in which are many management schemes, technological and ideological, structural and psychological, some of which came before Taylor, some after, and some are still to be developed. Today, we observe, there is a rebirth of the sweatshops (500 in New York City alone) which are the classic settings of "simple control" (*New York Times,* September 18, 1979). Brutal and direct domination of the workplace is not a mere vestigial memento of the capitalist past. Ask anyone who works in the fields of agribusiness. A study of the extent of this kind of work environment and management compared to the workplace of a Polaroid or IBM, which Edwards claims are representative of the prevailing contemporary workplace, might disclose a surprising fact: that there may be as many or more workers exposed to "simple control" as to "bureaucratic control." Certainly they coexist in a significant way.

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Edwards' second category, "technical control," is by no means as outdated as Edwards claims. For example, it is the use of new devices that enables management to de-skill clerical work, to separate such workers from conceptual aspects of the job by reducing the work to mere repetitive mechanical labor tied to machines. Here monopoly of knowledge, which is one of the key aims of Taylorism, is dramatically achieved, with ever smaller numbers of managers presiding over a more and more fragmented labor process. This, by the way, doesn't make robots of the workers involved, but dehumanizes the *work*. The workers remain very human indeed and, as history shows, will rebel against this dehumanization of work. (See Joan Greenbaum's new book, *In The Name of Efficiency,* Temple University Press, 1979.)

Again, the use of machinery, tape-directed or not, mechanical devices designed to reorganize and speed up the production process, is widespread and in full bloom. Research into the contemporary labor process is bringing us much information on this aspect of development.

For example, the technical department of General Motors has developed a small instrument called a Datamyte that makes time studies on an assembly line. This computer-chip device not only time-studies the work, but records breakdowns and bottlenecks and, last but not least, eliminates the time-study engineer as a presence on the floor. The United Automobile Workers is concerned with this technological revolution, and is quoted in the same article (*New York Times,* November 5, 1979) as fearing that "robots will increasingly replace human beings on the auto assembly line," and will strengthen industry's ability to exert control over the workers and their unions.

According to the *Times* article, Harley Shaiken, a writer and teacher who served as consultant on computer technology to the UAW in recent union negotiations, said, "New technology is more than just an efficient way to operate. It's a significant source of power, power in the marketplace, power over people." Technological control (Taylorism) is obviously not on the back burner. It seems to be entering a new, intensive phase.

Edwards' third category, elevated by him to the position of the currently dominant form of control, is the work of what Braverman called capitalism's "maintenance crew for the human machinery," while work itself is still organized on Taylorian principles. The process of the separation of the workers from the skills of the job, from all connection with the conceptual side of the work, and from

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significant knowledge of the labor process, commits more psychological mayhem upon workers than the best efforts of the personnel departments and academics, who, admittedly, try their very best to brainwash the working class. Taylor preferred workers to be dumb brutes, so that a minimum of motivation, primarily fear in his day, would be necessary. His contemporary management epigones design work, job hierarchies, etc., so as to require the more educated workers of today to use less and less of their knowledge. They would prefer robots.

Is the lack of political class consciousness in the United States working class traceable to the success of these efforts? According to Edwards, the fragmentation of the working class, and the success of "bureaucratic control" to divide the class, is the root cause. The workers have not achieved class consciousness "because they have been split into fractions," with each fraction pursuing its own special interests. Hence the demise of class issues. Undoubtedly this has played a part. But the lack of political class consciousness in the U.S. working class is a far more complex historical development, traceable to many sources; e.g., to ethnic divisions, the existence of economic frontiers providing opportunity for mobility, the lack of European-type class rigidities in the American past, and much more. A frontier exists here for much Marxist work to provide a better understanding of this political immaturity. Underneath it all, certainly, has been the ability of the rich U.S. capitalist system to provide, up to the seventies, a rising standard of living and a relatively prosperous economy.

It is curious that while Edwards attributes to the success of "bureaucratic control" a large part of the responsibility for the political immaturity of the U.S. working class, he at the same time claims that *Labor and Monopoly Capital* underestimated the class struggle, which, he holds, limited the effectiveness of earlier forms of control of labor and led to the more sophisticated forms.

Subjective control cannot be intelligently considered as a process disconnected from the entire social and economic system. When these economic forces produce social crisis, the effectiveness of propaganda at least diminishes.

The fact is that control and domination of the relations of production give capitalism the leverage it needs to have its way in the workplace. The class struggle places limits on the leverage, and dictates an ebb and flow of management pressure in response to the rise and fall of worker militancy.

It is a misreading of the realities of the class struggle to con-

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clude that this is a battle in which management has lost a great deal of ground. Not at all. Whoever controls the relations of production wins this battle. It is a war of attrition that wears out the bodies and the minds of workers and their leaders. Ask any shop steward. For every grievance won after a long strike, demonstrations, and tedious negotiations, management creates two dozen more. In life itself, not in academic theoreticism far removed from the "terrain," the social victory is capitalism's in this class struggle and will be until and unless it goes beyond job demands and aims at the heart of the matter.

Only on rare occasions has a volcanic eruption of the workers of this country temporarily torn power over the labor process from the hands of capitalism, giving us a preview of what can be. The wave of sitdown strikes in the middle and late thirties challenged capitalism in the workplace, humbled the giant corporations and instituted workers' control of work for a short period of time. In some places management was terrorized by militant workers rather than vice versa, and the effects did not subside for several years. Unions with a dynamic internal democracy were created, which took many years to housebreak, after a fierce red-baiting witchhunt.

This rise of militancy produced the New Deal, the Wagner Labor Relations Act, a welfare program, and unemployment compensation. But before an independent party of labor developed, the Second World War and then McCarthyism dispersed the radical leaven in the working class. Thus, in the end, workers' energies gave out and their lack of political class consciousness led to a failure to go on to the next stage of struggle. The incipient class consciousness was dissolved in the fat of the economic system. Real wages went up and the workers' standard of living rose for many years.

Braverman very modestly replied to critics who noted his "failure" to deal with politics in his book that he had bitten off as much as he could chew, and that in any case, he felt it was not yet time to try to generalize about the political future of the U.S. workers' movement. But Edwards has boldly ventured forth to advise us on what should be the political program for U.S. labor. It seems that we must look to Eurocommunism for our model and infuse the U.S. movement with a "democratic socialist" content that it has lacked in the past. "The commitment by the Western European Communist parties—French, Italian, Spanish and others —to a democratic program means that theoretical ideas will achieve their most severe and appropriate testing in the real practice of

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attempting a democratic transition." Thus far the "real practice" of the four parties lumped so carelessly together has produced nothing that we can detect of a transition toward socialism. Moreover, especially in Italy, where the weight of the Communist Party is greatest, we witness an enlightening demonstration of the use of reformist politics to transfer the costs of economic crisis onto the backs of the workers.

As we have noted before, Edwards claims the U.S. working class has not achieved class consciousness "because it has been split into fractions," each fraction pursuing its own special interest. Thus, the demise of class issues. As a solution he recommends the "historic compromise" in which class issues take a back seat in the interests of stability and the prevention of a threatening dictatorship. It seems to be the wisdom of the social-democratic left that the way to defeat dictatorship is to unite with the class forces who will turn to it when they feel they must. That the working class (and its allies) could possibly meet this threat by its own independent class means is unthinkable.

Up to now, Edwards states, "In addition to the accumulated wealth that Marx saw as an essential prerequisite to socialism, capitalism has . . . bequeathed us a second valuable legacy: democratic political traditions." To be sure, some of these have been hard won, he admits. These political concessions were made possible by the accumulated riches of Western capitalism, in part drained from the underdeveloped world.

"The central problem for our time is whether this relationship will continue," Edwards states, in his chapter entitled "Capitalism or Democracy," which is the historic issue as he sees it. It is his opinion that capitalism in the West is now preparing to undermine and destroy democracy. In the future, he asserts rather vaguely (here his proclivity for blueprints deserts him), socialists must make "democracy" the rallying cry "not only to unite the working class but also to unite the political and economic struggles of that class. . . . Most socialists acknowledge that previous formulations of strategy have failed to create revolution . . . anywhere in the advanced capitalist world, and in increasing numbers see that their failure stems directly from the failure to take democracy seriously." This is a curious reading of history.

In the struggles for the right to free speech, the right to organize unions, the right to vote—all civil rights up and down the line—the American left organizations of every persuasion have been in the forefront. Probably the widest constituency mobilized

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by the left was on issues of democratic rights: from the defense of Big Bill Haywood to the fight against the red-baiting drive in the CIO and McCarthyism, the radicals in the United States were the outstanding fighters and the immediate victims. The old left was guilty of many things, and it tried to create parties in the image of the Russian or other models, ignoring the particular needs of its own countries. But it cannot be shown that the failure of the left to build a genuine mass movement in this country is traceable to its failure to fight for democratic rights. Surely the strongest force behind the failure of the U.S. working class to radicalize and invent new political forms suitable to its needs was capitalism's ability to provide concessions to placate the angry workers who rose up in the thirties and forties, who then subsided into relative prosperity in the fifties and sixties.

That democracy should be a keynote of the left in the United States, and in the developed countries generally, cannot be disputed. But are we to rally behind a "democracy" on the Eurocommunist model, in a united front of workers' parties with bourgeois parties, ostensibly to prevent a takeover by a dictatorship, and in passing to sell the workers on absorbing the cost and effects of capitalism's crisis?

The best guarantee of democracy would be to assure a movement infused with the idea of democracy of the workplace not based on some variation of parliamentary representation, but on, in Harry Braverman's words, "the demystifying of technology and the complete revolutionary reorganization of the mode of production" (*Labor and Monopoly Capital,* p. 446), as a necessary prerequisite for the revolutionary transformation of society as a whole.

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FORMS OF CAPITALIST CONTROL OVER THE LABOR PROCESS

II

By Steve Diamond

The lack of any significant workers' political movement in the United States for more than four decades has been an intensely frustrating experience for the tiny American left. Attempts to go beyond the movements of the 1960s to a deeper analysis and response to capitalism have almost totally failed. On the one hand, the number of sects with "the answer" continues to multiply; on the other, many of those who still consider themselves socialists have moved steadily to the right. Unfortunately, the isolation that such developments reflect has not been clearly understood or analyzed by any of the isolated. We find, instead, elaborate justifications for such changes, none of which has anything in common with a Marxist approach to these problems. As part of the political drift to the right, a number of economists have begun to develop a new theory of the American working class within which their reformist politics finds a safe and comfortable niche. Though numerous articles in this area, including one book of essays,* have appeared in the past, Edwards' *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century* is the first attempt to draw political conclusions from the economic and historical analysis. The result is a reworking of Marxist theory which displaces its revolutionary content, denying both the need for a

Steve Diamond is a clerical worker at the University of California, Berkeley. He is also a shop steward in AFSCME #1695, the campus workers' union.

* Richard C. Edwards, Michael Reich, and David M. Gordon, eds., *Labor Market Segmentation* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1975).

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transformation of society and the leading role the working class must play in such a transformation. A closer look at Edwards' historical analysis and then at his political conclusions demonstrates this.

Edwards' argument, an attempt at a Marxist version of a theory known in academic circles as labor market segmentation, contends that as capitalism has developed so have the forms of capitalist control over their workforce. He identifies three forms of control—simple, technical, and bureaucratic—which, he argues, correspond roughly with three historical stages of capitalism. "Simple control" was used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries during the period of competitive capitalism. At this point the power of the boss or his foreman over production was at its highest: bullying and threatening of workers and arbitrary hiring and firing are common aspects of this form of control. Simple control, however, sparked militant responses by workers which, Edwards argues, proved costly to capitalists. The Homestead and Pullman strikes and the growth of the IWW and the Socialist Party are cited as examples.

This militance, Edwards contends, caused capitalists to introduce new forms of control. At first they tried employee welfare programs, company unions, and scientific management. These efforts failed, however, to stifle the workers' challenges. Significant strikes at International Harvester (1916), General Electric (1918), and United States Steel (1919) caused capitalists to look for less visible forms of worker control. In the new, large, "core" firms, which began to dominate the U.S. economy in the first half of the the twentieth century, a second form of control "emerged out of [these] firms' attempts to turn the tide of conflict on the shop and office floor decisively in its favor." This new form, called "technical control," was an attempt to embed control of the workforce in the technology of the production process. The major manufacturing companies of the auto, steel, rubber and electrical industries were the first to introduce this process. Edwards points out, however, that technical control also gave increased power to workers as it drew together much larger numbers of workers in one plant: "Technical control linked together the plant's workforce, and when the line stopped, every worker necessarily joined the strike. Moreover, in a large, integrated manufacturing operation, such as auto production, a relatively small group of disciplined unionists could cripple an entire system by shutting down a part of the line." (p. 128) These industries were soon met with the industrial-union drives of the 1930s.

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The third form of control, most important to "core" firms today, Edwards says, was developed in response to this militance of the 1930s. "[T]echnical control can never again *by itself* constitute an adequate control system for the core firms' main industrial labor force. The presence of unions with effective (even if circumscribed) countervailing power is forcing a change. . . ." (p. 129) The new form is described as "bureaucratic control" which institutionalizes hierarchy, making work "highly stratified": "Each job is given its distinct title and description; and impersonal work rules govern promotion. 'Stick with the corporation,' the worker is told, 'and you can ascend up the ladder.' The company promises the workers a *career*." (p. 21)

There are a number of serious problems with Edwards' argument. On a simple historical level, Edwards' description of the introduction of control systems simply does not fit the facts. As Anne Lawrence has pointed out, the emergence of the technical mode of control did not occur in all of the industries which experienced labor conflict in the pre-First World War period (e.g., railroad and coal), but in the new, mass-production industries of the 1920s: auto, rubber, chemical, and electrical. And, although the CIO won its greatest victories in these new industries, Edwards uses as examples of bureaucratic control other "core" industries: data processing, camera and film, steel and telephone. With the exception of steel, these industries were almost unaffected by the 1930s union drives.* Data processing, of course, hardly existed in the 1930s, so one must look at something other than worker militancy to find the catalyst for the introduction of bureaucratic control in this industry.

Further, to the extent that Edwards sees the 1930s union movement as sparked by the use of technical control, his argument cannot explain the growth of unions in the trucking industry. Over-the-road drivers, dock workers, and intra-city drivers were certainly subject to nothing but simple control from the start of their industry, yet the Teamsters' major growth came in the 1930s after the Minneapolis strike of 1934. Why didn't they grow earlier as did unions in other industries subject to simple control? Clearly, other factors must be considered in addition to the introduction of technical control in order to explain this growth. A look at the general decline in working conditions (including wage cuts and

*Anne Lawrence, "Recent Theories of Labor Market Segmentation: A Review Essay" (Unpublished ms., University of California, 1978), pp. 22-23.

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layoffs brought on by the depression) and the years of patient work of militant socialists and trade unionists on the shop floor would be good places to begin such an explanation.

Beyond this historical discongruity, however, Edwards' analysis reveals a serious theoretical problem. He attempts to argue that there is a direct causal relation between worker militance and capitalist decision-making. If such a relation exists, is it, then, the struggles of the workers themselves, in defense of their class interests, which actually strengthen the capitalist system? In fact, the development of capitalism cannot be seen as simply a clash between workers and bosses over the size and taste of the pie. It is true that capitalists react to working-class militance, but they do not do so, as Marx wrote, "just as they please." They are constrained by the logic of the system as a whole, which embodies competition among capitalists as well as between classes. Their decisions concerning the structure of the production process are complex responses to specific situations. It would seem more logical to argue that new forms of control develop as the requirements of production itself change. This is, however, a competitive process, even in the period of "monopoly capitalism"; and the threat of failure—even of general crisis—persists. A decline in profit can cause a resurgence of older forms of control. Rather than a simple congruity between types of control and historical periods of capitalism, one should expect an interwoven development of the workplace both inside and between firms. And, despite his attempt to argue otherwise, there is some evidence for this view in Edwards' book.

In his description of bureaucratic control, for example, he suggests that this system rewards three traits in workers: "rules orientation," especially attendance and punctuality; "dependability," including effective use of time, thoroughness and accuracy; and workers who identify with the company. But these three qualities mean little except in relation to different kinds of work. Edwards admits that hourly employees must conform to rules orientation, whereas middle-level employees must be dependable, and upper-level employees must identify with the company. Most lower-level workers, of course, are production or low-paid clerical workers, for whom production quotas and work pace are more easily controlled by the clock. There would seem to be little difference between "rules orientation" and most aspects of the earlier simple control. The importance of simple control's most blatant aspect, speed-up, has quickly re-emerged with the economic recession. Safeway Foods, Inc., for example, recently introduced a computerized productivity plan in all of its West Coast warehouses.

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Workers' protests have been met with defiance by the company, including unprecedented union-busting tactics.

Why did bureaucratic control of middle- and upper-level employees develop? Nowhere does Edwards argue that these employees ever presented a militant challenge to previous forms of control. The answer is, I believe, to be found in the emergence of, on the one hand, large and multinational corporations requiring sophisticated forms of administration, communication, and finance; and, on the other, the growing importance of science and technology to increasing productivity. The tasks of middle- and upper-level employees are more complex (often creative within limits) and cannot be regulated by a stop-watch. The harsh voice of the foreman is clearly out of place in the laboratory or computer center of today's modern firm. Yet, even here, among the ties and white collars, one aspect of simple control can penetrate when a crisis hits: the capitalist's power to hire and fire. The heavy lay-offs of engineers and other white-collar workers at AT&T and Polaroid during the 1974-1975 recession certainly had a demoralizing impact on those who remained. The transformation of the workplace can only be explained as a response to changes in the production process, enforced by the logic of a competitive, crisis-ridden system.

The political implications of Edwards' analysis may already be clear to some. He attempts to link the three forms of control, simple, technical and bureaucratic, to distinct sectors of the labor force which, according to him and others, have given rise to "enduring fractions" of the working class. The first fraction is made up of the low-paid, non-union production and clerical worker; the second, the traditional, unionized, industrial worker; and the third, the white-collar and crafts worker, predominantly professional, technical and administrative employees. As he writes,

> [T]he redivision of labor splintered the working class; rather than creating new "classes," it has established enduring *fractions* of the same class and by changing the constellation of class forces in society it has reconstituted the basis of American politics. Class-fraction politics may well have created a situation in which American society is stuck[!] between capitalism and its future. . . . [T]he fractionalization of the working class in the economic sphere has probably made class confrontation unlikely; in the forseeable future it has certainly left the working class too weak and too seriously divided to challenge capitalist hegemony. (p. 22)

The solution to this impasse, he says, is for socialists to raise the demand for "democracy" in a struggle over the existing state.

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It is here, on the terrain of the state, that a unified and more fundamental challenge to capitalist hegemony is to be waged. The left should avoid "reflexlike" biases against the "sham" of bourgeois democracy. In the style of the Eurocommunist parties we are to construct strategies that encourage rank-and-file activism, but do not turn away from the responsibilities of power, all in an attempt to construct a "democratic transition" to socialism.

There is much here that is antithetical to revolutionary Marxism. Given the earlier discussion there would seem to be little support for either the theoretical or historical existence of class fractions based on the controls Edwards describes. The impact of the current economic crisis, for example, is felt across all three of these class "fractions." Rather than call for an abstract democracy, socialists could start by asking: "Who is to pay for the crisis?" One could then point out the current system's answer: lower wages, reduced social programs and a deterioration in working conditions.

I am not suggesting that there are no divisions in the working class. There are, in fact, very serious divisions, but they are not based simply on an undemocratic capitalism. Edwards' fractions, for example, are heavily biased by race and sex, as well as control. Yet such aspects of class divisions are not resolved by calls on the state for democracy, as the more militant wings of the black and women's liberation movements have known for quite some time. Furthermore, the working class will, for some time, be confused and divided by its current union leadership; simply being able to elect one's leaders is not enough. Initial moves by the rank and file for union democracy must (and often do) give way to demands for a real change on the shop floor.*

None of these aspects of class division are seriously dealt with by Edwards. He is unable to do so, I believe, because of his particular understanding of the nature of democracy and the state. He seems to be afraid of the logical conclusions of a Marxist approach to these concepts. Socialist democracy can only be assured by the establishment of workers' power embodied in a reorganization of society by workers themselves. This revolutionary process of replacing one class by another will inevitably be disruptive and,

*Edwards ignores the continuing significance of shop-floor struggles. The Lordstown strike, which he considers a key example of worker revolt against management control, came out of ongoing shop-floor confrontation. There were over 1400 grievances under procedure prior to the strike. The strength of every rank-and-file movement can be measured, I think, by its strength on the shop floor. See interview with Gary Bryner (UAW President Lordstown local) in Studs Terkel, *Working* (New York: Avon, 1972).

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more likely than not, violent. That such a situation has never been permanently successful is no reason for revising the basic Marxist approach to such problems. To reach a revolutionary stage in history is a long tortuous process. It is not a question of simple insurrection or assault with no social basis (though its final moments may give this appearance), but rather of slow, patient building on the shop-floor and in working-class communities. It must be a process that comes from below, thus ensuring its democratic nature.

Edwards, however, in his impatience with the American working class, looks for shortcuts. Perhaps pressure on the existing state can restore substance to its supposedly democratic forms? Why, though, should workers have any faith in a state whose legislative bodies cannot establish even formal equality for half the population or support the mildest reforms of an anti-labor law? Or in a state whose armed might is completely isolated from popular control? To maintain such faith would be to ensure that the working class repeats the tragic defeats of Spain in 1936 or Chile in 1973. A true understanding of the history of the American working class must begin with a basic confidence in its historic mission as the only class capable of ending capitalism. To proceed with economic and historic analysis on any other basis guarantees the continuance of the American left's disorientation and isolation.

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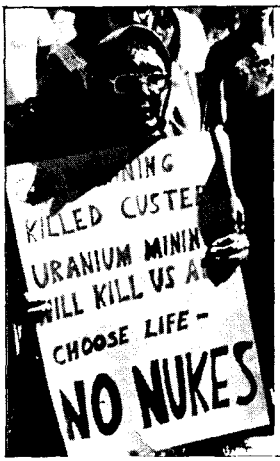

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MODERN AFRICAN HISTORY AND ITS ROOTS

By Ann Seidman

Basil Davidson, *Let Freedom Come: Africa in Modern History* (Boston: Atlantic–Little, Brown, 1978).

"The history of modern Africa is above all a history of the ideas and development of nationalism through the twentieth century." (p. 15) This is how Basil Davidson introduces his latest book, *Let Freedom Come,* in which he employs his extensive knowledge of African history to formulate a synthesis focusing on the complex relationships between changing modes of production, emerging class structures, and the formation of ideologies which have shaped the last century of the struggle for freedom.

It is no easy task to select the critical trends and issues from the vast array of events and personalities that have influenced the African continent's vital role in the world system of today. Consequently, this is not an easy book but a richly complex study, worth reading more than once—even several times—to ferret out, from the wealth of historical detail, the author's insights on a whole range of widely debated issues.

Davidson prepares the way for his analysis of modern African history with a survey of its roots in earlier times, beginning with the nature of precapitalist modes of production. Here, his conclusions are drawn largely from evidence he has presented in earlier works: African cultures were embodied in communities of differing sizes and power and at differing stages of economic and social organization, bound together by common languages, cultures, and

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community rules. In Europe, such communities were the forerunners of the nation-states that emerged with the advent of capitalism. In Africa, however, "the centrally unifying concept, resting on the mode of production which has shaped it but also been shaped by it, is that of kinship." (p. 48)

By the end of the nineteenth century, Davidson asserts, African communities were no longer living—if they ever had been—in the "bliss of primitive communism." By then, a pure subsistence economy was almost never to be found. Indeed, beginning about 400 B.C., or earlier in favored regions like the Nile, more complex modes of production had evolved in which lineage leaders, acknowledged community heads, regulated and accumulated exploitable labor power. "With this lineage mode of production . . . the ancient inequalities of African society began," Davidson writes, adding that "they were severe. Women provided the chief source of exploitable labour power: as daughters but even more as wives; and in a large sense these lineage modes of production became systems of tributary labour." (p. 54) But he suggests that at this stage "slave" labor, of men as well as women, appears more akin to later forms of wage labor than to the condition of "rightless chattels." In the easygoing ethos of rural life, social stratification was not so rigid; even women and slaves could retain some sense of personal identity and value.

Over time, however, as the lineage mode of production developed, the state emerged—that is, "the qualitative development from a quantity of lineages to a community equipped with structures of central government or control." (p. 55) Stratification became less easygoing; simple states developed into complex ones, made up of several or even many communities, spurred by the development of long-distance trade and the need to secure, regulate, or monopolize commercial control.

These economies were far from stagnant. They grew into larger, more effective entities that showed great enterprise. But they did not develop into different, more advanced capitalist structures. Given the complexities of such systems, Davidson emphasizes that no single explanation can account for this fact; he does suggest one key factor, however, when he writes that "a lineage mode of production, content with wageless labour, crucially inhibited the development of wage-paid labour . . . new methods of production, and . . . new relations of production." (p. 58)

The new coastal partnership with European commerce, first in gold and ivory, later in the sale of captives for overseas enslave-

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ment, stimulated the rise of advanced forms of mercantile initiative and the emergence of a "new class" of coastal merchants; but these "remained as peripheral elements within their enclosing systems." (p. 60) The merchants were agents of export and import between the great island chiefs and kings who fostered state-controlled trading, on the one hand, and European businessmen who controlled shipping, overseas markets, and sources of imported items like guns and gunpowder, on the other. They had little economic incentive to invest in production until the decline of the Atlantic slave trade and the emergence of "legitimate" trade in export crops produced by Africans.

And then, before a new, emergent bourgeoisie could break free from the old structural constraints, the colonial "scramble," backed by technologically superior weapons, imposed European imperial state structures which barred African merchants from competing with European monopolies. The resulting crisis "led onward to the groundwork of nationalism."

Having situated his subject in a long-term historical context, Davidson devotes the remainder of the book to an explanation of the consequences of this experience for the nationalist movements that had, by the mid-1970s, created nearly fifty new states on the continent. He begins his narrative with the first Pan-African Congress in 1899, a year when a Gold Coast African declared, "The feverish rush for plunder and division of Africa is about to be consummated. . . ." and the British were "slogging northwards to the Transvaal." (p. 28) He sees the historian's task as deciding what, in the "confused and often chaotic river of events," constitutes the underlying structure of its "shaping bed." (p. 23) Using this metaphor as his organizing principle, he sets out to analyze the current century both through "structural chapters" that suggest "aspects of the river's bed at this or that point of time" (p. 25) and via more conventional narratives that trace the river's "flow"—the specific personalities and events that act on and react to these structural features.

Davidson maintains that neither the Africans nor the Europeans were fully conscious of the structural factors that gave impulse to the colonial invasion. It is possible, nevertheless, to trace "a number of decisive underlying motives": the ambition of European traders to secure their own monopolies, breaking opposing African ones; the mounting rivalries between European powers; the conflicts of a variety of special interests; and the larger capitalists' desire for profitable investments in mineral deposits.

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Davidson divides colonial activities into three fields: the goading of Africans into migratory labor reserves for European-owned mines and estates throughout the continent, as well as for African-owned export-crop farms in West Africa; the expropriation of African lands in eastern, central, and southern Africa; and the imposition of monopolistic trading companies which, with the aid of colonial governments, destroyed African competition and thus gained control of the lucrative overseas trade. It is perhaps unfortunate that he did not also analyze the way a handful of giant British and French banks shaped the colonial money and banking structures, playing a key role in funneling the profits of expanding colonial business back to the metropolis.

Davidson identifies the 1930s as the great turning point in the colonial "enclosure." During this decade the imperial powers, seeking to elude the disastrous impact of the Great Depression, not only expanded their colonial systems, but cast them in an increasingly rigid and exclusive mold.

Against this brief, "forbiddingly bleak" background of events, Davidson now turns to the first half-century of African responses and initiatives, identifying the two major trends. The vast majority of the population first strove to defend or advance their individual interests and identities by defensive warfare or alliances with the Europeans; then sought to shape new life patterns by compromises marked by occasional outbursts of resistance. Gradually, their organizational efforts shifted from a religious focus to trade-union actions. But the concept of nationalism meant practically nothing to them.

The second trend, initially dwarfed by the first, was spearheaded by a small group of Western-educated men and a few women. Theirs was a deep-seated and distressing contradiction: typically, they rejected the indigenous cultures of the "illiterate masses" but were themselves rejected and discriminated against by the "white civilization" they sought to emulate. Some began tentatively to espouse nationalist or Pan-Negroist ideas. With but a few exceptions, however, only in South Africa did antiracist ideas begin to coalesce, with revolutionary principles based on analysis of the class nature of the colonial system.

Although pressure for change was clearly being exerted by a vast number of sometimes contradictory forces, it was the Second World War that proved decisive. Some African recruits and conscripts died in remote European and Asian battles, while those who returned brought with them a determination to build a new life. At the same time, the old imperialist monopolies were shaken

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to their roots. The Americans on one side, the Soviet Union on the other—though for different reasons—had no interest in restoring them. Yet, wartime needs had also stimulated African exports —and thus reinforced and solidified the structures of colonial extraction *per se*. The undermining and dislocation of African communities proceeded apace. And ideas of nationalism were spurred by the Atlantic Charter and promises of freedom.

After the war, as Davidson shows, the European powers sought to consolidate their economic expansion through a variety of mostly ill-fated "development" schemes. The United States, while eschewing any territorial gain, promised development assistance to African elites, seeking to open the doors to American enterprise. Increasingly, militant trade unionism was shunted out of politics, its leaders encouraged to affiliate with the "moderate" ICFTU by U.S. funds and scholarships. Many nationalist leaders, not a little fearful of trade unions, preferred to organize their own demonstrations. In settler-dominated regions, anti-trade-union violence tended to strengthen trade union–nationalist alliances—at least until the nationalists, having gained state power, began to oppose the militancy inspired by social struggle.

Davidson sharply exposes the contradictions between the limited nationalism that shaped most of the new African nation-states and the continuing struggle for social change. In this characteristically vivid prose, he draws a parallel with the "balkanized" politics that typified Eastern Europe during the 1920s:

> Like circumstances tend to produce like results. In Africa as in Eastern Europe . . . "strong men" walked in solitary power while corruption spread like a disease, and force took the place of fellowship and violence of persuasion. Once again it was shown that this way of solving the national problem could not solve the social problem; that the colonial state turned nation-state could not be usefully reformed, but must be revolutionized; and that only this kind of revolution, only a clear priority to the solving of the social problem by whatever means the future might reveal, would be able to fulfill the promises of national freedom. (p. 293)

In short, while the gains of independence were real and many, Davidson shows that the imported model of political and socioeconomic organization exacted a high price. The anticolonialists had developed into nationalists, but for the most part they were nationalists without nations: the nations remained to be built. Meanwhile, those in power were urging "modernization," and increasingly appeared to be acting not as national builders but as a

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property-owning class seeking to advance its own interests. By 1970, some 19 states were under one or another kind of military regime, with more on the way. The majority of their inhabitants continued to live in deepening rural poverty or urban slums.

Davidson, like many other scholars, has difficulty in arriving at an appropriate terminology for analyzing the class structures characteristic of the new African states. From 90 to 95 percent of them, by his estimate, were not united around either a new social consciousness nor a coherent nationalist ideology. Rather, the new nations, still predominantly rural in nature, remained little more than collections of communities that owed their amalgamation to the arbitrary lines set down by colonial frontiers. Their mode of production, however, was no longer that within which their separate ancestral lineage systems had been molded. The imposed colonial mode had forged externally dependent capitalist export enclaves surrounded by large underdeveloped "support zones" providing cheap labor and, where possible, cheap food. These regions became mutually interdependent, as growing numbers of under- and unemployed, many maintaining rural ties, crowded into urban slums alongside the lucky few with stable jobs. Yet these new working-class elements lacked consciousness of their emerging status.

Distinguished from the "lowest classes"—the "have-nots"—Davidson suggests, there began to appear the "have-somethings" variously and, he argues, inadequately termed "intermediate strata," or "petty-bourgeoisie."

Unfortunately, Davidson does not explore the way foreign firms, through control of the "commanding heights"—basic industries, banks, and foreign and internal wholesale trade—continued to dominate the new nation-states' political economies. But he does indicate the futility of expecting these new state systems—"occupied" groups representing a tiny percentage of the population, yet speaking in the name of "national unity"—to contribute to better conditions for the great majority of the people. Most Africans, indeed, "peering into this national idea from the outside," remained "dubious and confused, and not much less alienated from the sources of power than during colonial times." (p. 315)

Davidson holds that the hope for real development lies in the new African model growing out of the politics of mass participation, appearing primarily in countries with weak economies. Some, like Tanzania, developed into independent regimes from within an established "neocolonial" situation; others were still states-in-formation, like Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau.

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He sketches the efforts of the Tanzanian party, TANU, to build mass participation as a defense against the increasing power of a bureaucracy enlarged by the nationalization of banks and other foreign enterprises. By the 1970s, he notes, these attempts were the subject of critical debate. The central theoretical question was whether the dominant strata, bureaucratic or otherwise, given their technical expertise in state management, must necessarily come down on the procapitalist side in a class contest with peasants and wage workers. Davidson saw hope of an alternative outcome in Somalia; but events of the last years seem to indicate a less promising direction, with traditional nationalism and military confrontation apparently fostering increased authoritarianism.

Brief mention is also made of other attempts to link old forms of self-defense against colonialism with new forms cast in the mold of modernizing but revolutionary ideas. The Lumumbists' efforts to organize guerrilla warfare in Zaire in the mid-1960s, for example, ended in disaster because the leaders failed to develop modernizing theories to replace unscientific reliance on ancestral beliefs. He contrasts this experience to that of the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, which initially confronted similar conditions. As areas of Guinea-Bissau became liberated, some of the leaders began to exploit their new power for personal gain, rejecting overall national authority and abusing the people, especially women; they also encouraged reliance on old customs and beliefs associated with witchcraft. The PAIGC had to mobilize against these traditional ideas; in 1963, while the struggle was still going on, it held a conference to confront the issue head-on. As Davidson says, it was a critical moment, decisive for further progress, when the primacy of ancestral beliefs was made to give way to a fully secular interpretation of reality. He cites Neto, the late Angolan leader, who emphasized that in his country, too, the key task was "to free and modernize our peoples by a dual revolution: against their traditional structures which can no longer serve them, and against colonial rule." (p. 350)

Achievement of success in the liberation struggles, Davidson writes,

> meant accepting that the solving of the "national question," the problem of building a national consciousness real enough to absorb each existing "pre-national" consciousness or individualist divergence, must always depend on solving the "social question," the problem of meeting the material and cultural needs of everyday life. Out of this necessary acceptance (and those who refused it

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were lost) there came the practice of their revolutionary theory: the immensely difficult promotion, in liberated zones, of a new socio-cultural system based on the democracy of village committees and the creation of elementary schools, clinics, trading networks, tribunals, and the rest. A new type of state could thus emerge in embryo even while the wars continued. (p. 354)

And he concludes that "what the new republics of the mid-1970s adhered to was in no way 'African socialism,' or 'Arab socialism,' or any other ornamental substitute for the real thing: they adhered to 'scientific socialism.'" (p. 354)

The basic difference between the "old" and "new" nationalism, Davidson points, out, is that in the latter, "the social question had to have primacy over the national question. You had to start from the real and immediate needs of the people 'at the base': their need for control over their own communities, their need for understanding how to use this control so as to improve life, their need for means to make this improvement possible." (p. 378)

Additional theoretical and practical problems, Davidson points out, must be resolved in the continuing struggle to realize the "new African model." First of all, he suggests, the revolutionary inner leadership "core" needs to expand and democratize itself into a revolutionary party within the national movement. Further, he poses the question of the relationship between such a revolutionary party and the new state it has brought into existence. One might add that this question is rendered vastly more perplexing by the difficulties that participatory state institutions, shaped in liberated village areas, must inevitably confront when they seek to achieve national control of the technologically complex "commanding heights" in order to transform their heritage of externally dependent political-economic structures.

And beyond these questions looms the problem of resolving potential conflicts among the new African nations, of achieving the "organic unity between national peoples . . . that would mark the supervision of the frontiers of colonial partition, on the threshold of a new era, and the onset of a new history." (p. 382)

One may not agree with all of Davidson's theoretical formulations. One could argue over his selection of this or that event or trend as the crucial piece of evidence. But this is surely an important book for those concerned with the use of theory as a guide, not only in Africa but throughout the Third World. It is a book not simply to be read, but to be studied in depth.

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(*Continued from inside front cover*)
then invited to a reception hosted by President Nakamura and the economics department. The remarkable thing about this reception was that not only faculty members but also their wives were in attendance. In case you may wonder what was remarkable about this, the answer is that in Hosei's century-long history (the university will celebrate its centenary in 1980) there has never been an affair of this kind to which faculty wives have been invited, reflecting of course the still strongly sexist character of Japanese society. The occasion for this "breakthrough" was that the invitation to visit Hosei had been extended to both of us, not just to me as the one who would deliver a series of lectures. It seems logical enough that since we were both invited, we should both be officially welcomed. We learned, however, that it wasn't quite that simple, that quite a struggle took place before logic won the day. Whether this affair will set a precedent remains to be seen; we learned the next day that after we left the party the men took their wives home and then went out for a few drinks by themselves. And subsequent discussions with a number of generally progressive people, including Americans living in Tokyo, suggest that the feminist movement is still in its infancy in Japan.

"First impressions are of course always likely to be misleading, but they also tend to be vivid. And perhaps the most striking is that the sense of unease and impending crisis which is so pervasive in the United States is largely absent here. Inflation is mild, the official unemployment rate (understated but probably not much more so than in the United States) is about 2 percent, and real wages have been steadily rising for a long time. This is not to say that Japan has no economic problems or that the longer-run future is all that bright (that is another story), but for the moment the contrast between the quiet atmosphere here and the tension at home is very marked. (A statistical indicator might be read into the fact that the Bank of Japan's rediscount rate was raised the other day by a full point to 6.25 percent! Which is to be compared of course to the Federal Reserve's 12 percent.)

"Sorting all this out and coming to some sort of meaningful conclusions is going to be quite an assignment. But at any rate one thing is pretty clear to me already. We in the United States, even well-informed people on the left, are sadly lacking not only in factual information about Japan but even more in a coherent framework within which to organize what we do know."

There is good news for the growing number of MR readers and others who have been waiting for the paperback edition of *Let Me Speak!* by Domitila Barrios de Chungara, with Moema Viezzer. It is now available (see our ad on page 53 for price and information on ordering). We anticipate an expanding interest in this book which has already, in its hardcover edition, attracted readers from many sectors—feminists, Latin Americanists, trade unionists—and many others who have responded to the human dimensions of Domitila's simple but dramatic story. Reviewers too have been enthusiastic. *Spare Rib*, a London feminist journal, writes: "Many Western feminists are ignorant about conditions in the Third World, and do not understand the problems of Third World women. Her book will bridge a part of this gap, and will encourage readers to develop feminist internationalism." *Latin American Working Group Letter* (Canada): "The book is excellent for lending to one's friends and relatives who don't understand why one is doing solidarity work, or why capitalism is such a bad thing."

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